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OR,
THE MEN AND GOVERNMENT,
THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF CUBA,

AS
SEEN BY AMERICAN EYES.

BY
DEMOTICUS PHILALETHES.

Desinite indoctum vana dulcedine vulgus
Fallere.

Ovid. METAM. V. ix. 15.

NEW-YORK:

D. APPLETON & CO., 346 & 348 BROADWAY.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

(FROM DEMOTICUS PHILALETHES TO CHARLES * * *).

HAVANA,

MY DEAR CHARLES :

IT HAS been a source of no small gratification to me that you consider the publication of my Letters as likely to prove useful to our country; and I therefore grant with pleasure my consent to the proposal you have kindly made. Although the faults of style, which you cannot fail to have noticed in them, may wound my *amour-propre* as a writer; still I am satisfied to have them published just as they are, for my highest ambition will be gratified if some good may thereby be accomplished.

It is, however, necessary to say a few words by way of apology for these inaccuracies. I first wrote the Letters in Spanish, and my friend Joseito, then translated them into English. In this manner we respectively improved our knowledge of each other's language; yet though we mutually corrected our exercises, some grammatical errors unavoidably escaped our notice, and that want of fluency, so natural to persons who do not write in the language in which they have been accustomed to think, is perceptible in all my Letters.

The fear of incurring the charge of plagiarism has considerably reduced the boundaries of the field which

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

I have surveyed. The course of independent investigation which I have pursued, has multiplied the difficulties of my task; but I have thereby been enabled to impart *entirely new* data and reliable information, instead of merely copying from books already known. My work will be therefore a supplement, as you have properly remarked, to those heretofore written on the same subject; and that such a supplement is necessary, can be very easily demonstrated.

CUBA, the largest, wealthiest and most advantageously situated of the Antilles; Cuba, which for her fruitful soil, delightful climate and valuable products, has been justly called "The Pearl of the Seas;" the beautiful Cuba, distant only a few miles from our shores, is very imperfectly known by our people. And yet no foreign country, old England excepted, deserves more of our attention; not only because it is inevitably bound to become one of the States of our Confederacy, and therefore an intimate knowledge of its value and probable growth is of the greatest importance, but also because the ties that unite the two countries are already so close that we must necessarily feel in some degree the effects of all the vicissitudes of our neighbor, both political and social.

Unfortunately those who have the best opportunity to become fully acquainted with this country, and who are qualified to impart to us the most reliable information, viz.: the native Cubans themselves, cannot do this in a proper manner, because the press is not free; and the works published here on the subject cannot but betray the influence exerted on their authors, by a jealous and narrow minded governmental policy. One work of this kind partly published, some years ago, by Don Ramon de la Sagra, and not yet finished, with the title of "Natural, Physical and Political History of the Island of

Cuba," contains but little recent information respecting her ; and little reliance can be placed upon it, in view of the fact that it was dedicated to Queen Christina, and published under the patronage of the Spanish Government. The political portion of this book is nothing but a confused accumulation of ill-arranged abstracts, selected with bad taste, and without any literary merit. Its author is the Professor of whom I spoke in my XLVI Letter who without any *knowledge* of Botany, came to Havana to *teach* it.

The works heretofore published on Cuba, in our country, generally deserve our praise. "Neque enim aut aliena vituperare, aut nostra jactantius prædicare, animus est," but having a due regard to truth, we must acknowledge that the information respecting the Island they convey, is scanty and meagre, even when they do not inculcate falsehoods and errors. This must needs have been the case, and I will adduce the grounds on which my opinions rest.

In the first place, a government like this, which does not aim to promote the general good, but to benefit itself and increase its own power, does not allow the mode of its administration to be freely examined, nor the true causes of the prosperity or decay of the country to be openly discussed, together with those abuses, which especially contribute to the wealth of its creatures.

It has a lively interest in covering every thing with a veil of mystery, in order to prevent any light from shining on its procedures, and laying open the enormities it daily commits ; and instead of facilitating the inquiries of a traveller, they endeavor by all means, especially if he is foreigner, to throw obstacles on his way, and if his purpose is ascertained to be the study of the country, in order to write upon it, no efforts are spared to thwart his

Besides, none of the writers who have presented us with works on Cuba, have so far as I know, visited this Island for the especial purpose of describing it after due study and observation; this has been in all cases, a secondary object. Their main design in coming has been the transaction of private business, commonly some mercantile speculation; whereas in order to succeed in any good degree in the difficult undertaking of making Cuba and its affairs known to the world, it is necessary that this should be not only the chief, but the only object of one's visit. It seems to me that even a hasty perusal of my Letters will at once show how much labor and trouble must be spent in discovering, understanding and explaining habits and customs which nobody had heretofore noticed, and enigmas that former travellers had not even observed. It will also be easily seen, how difficult, if not impossible it would be, even for those who possess all necessary qualifications to learn and explain them, if *all* their *endeavors* are not directed to this end, and every available means of investigation employed.

The "Essay on Cuba" by Baron Humboldt may be quoted as an exception, but the fact that nearly half a century has passed since its illustrious author visited the Island, warrants us in thinking that a wide difference must exist between its present condition and that described by the Baron; for such is the case with all countries, and especially with young ones. Those who may read that work and compare it to my Letters, will at once perceive the difference of views of their respective authors. The writer of the former has considered the Island in its relations with other countries, but without any regard to its political condition, a task to which the great Prussian *savant* could not come without prejudice: the author of the latter, on the contrary, it will be seen, has thoroughly

examined Cuba in all its lights, and set forth its form of government, in its true character, without that high coloring which private and interested views are apt to occasion. He has also taken pains to unfold, even the most minute particulars of the social fabric, which in spite of their *apparent* insignificance, are often the causes of the most important events.

It is usually the case that travellers arriving in a foreign land confine themselves in their social intercourse to the circle of their own countrymen. These, however, are unable to impart any information, except what may be gained by very superficial and imperfect observations, as their investigations cannot have been so deep or thorough as those of the natives. And even among well-informed citizens, multitudes are unprepared to describe their own institutions for want of analytical habits, or from not noticing many existing abuses, on account of their very prevalence.

Wishing to avoid these liabilities, I applied to natives who besides an intimate knowledge of affairs in general, possessed a sound judgment and an investigating disposition. It has been indeed a very happy incident to have found them, and I do not claim any praise for it, though I may be entitled to some credit if I have succeeded in deriving all possible benefit from their information and discussions. The impartial public, who shall read my Letters, will be able to ascertain to what extent I have profited by the facilities afforded me.

Another great obstacle in the way of strangers desiring to become acquainted with the real character and condition of Cuba, is the language spoken in it. A German, a Russian, etc., who can speak English or French, will travel through Great Britain or France without any difficulty from the language; but those who have made them-

selves masters of the Castilian tongue, though they will be understood by the greater part of the Creoles, will nevertheless find it difficult to understand the dialect of the populace, especially with the accuracy and ease necessary to become well acquainted with their feelings and habits. My readers will also notice that very few travellers, indeed, would have related many highly interesting facts and occurrences which are scattered through my Letters. But besides these there are other obstacles still to overcome. It would not be sufficient to understand the Creole language if, by long practice and continued observations, the traveller had not learned how to bring down to the proper level the grand hyperboles so prevalent among the people. It is necessary either to spend many years of continual observation in Cuba, or to receive the careful explanations of some intelligent native before we can arrive at the true meaning of numberless phrases in common use by the people.

There is also prevalent among the Islanders, an almost incredible facility in using the phrase "*me consta*," and thus vouching for reported occurrences which they have neither witnessed, nor learned from reliable sources. If the narrators believe them, they do not hesitate to guarantee their accuracy, and become responsible for them, with a boldness truly astounding. My own experience taught me to scrutinize with great care all the statements made to me; and hence I can affirm with confidence that no person will dare to contradict any assertion which I classify as true in my Letters.

The diversity of political opinions prevailing in Cuba, on account of the late revolutionary movements, and springing from the opposite views of the several parties is another powerful obstacle to a foreigner in acquiring accurate information. For the very reason that the press

is not free, and that no one is allowed to gainsay what is published in the newspapers, nobody places any reliance on what appears in them, even when emanating from the government itself; hence several different versions of correct news may seem equally well founded, and are promulgated even by those who are not inclined in the least to alter the truth. Moreover, the people being accustomed to see the government making the most incredible blunders, do not consider the most astounding nonsense, with which it may be charged, as improbable.

Great carefulness and continued circumspection are therefore necessary to avoid accusing the Spanish officers unjustly, or on the other hand failing to give them all the credit they really deserve. On this point the reader may be sure that the greatest impartiality will be found in my Letters, as may very easily be tested by inquiring of any competent and well informed person as to the accuracy of the facts narrated.

No anecdote of the many related in the course of my writings, has been obtained from any doubtful source, but the truth of each has been fully proved, and many persons have wondered how certain details could have come to light, which were only obtained by continued and difficult researches.

That part of my work which treats on judicial matters and the secrets of the management of the tribunals, will especially attract the attention of my readers. It will easily be seen that there is no misrepresentation here, when I assert that I owe this information to an old lawyer, intimately acquainted with all the mysteries of that complicated and defective piece of social machinery. It is, indeed, necessary not only to be a learned jurist, but to be endowed with an uncommon spirit of investigation, and with an extraordinary sagacity, in order to discover

the true origin of the abuses, and the corrupt sources of the blunders committed in this important branch of the administration. I believe that I have clearly demonstrated several facts, which may heretofore have seemed doubtful; and one of the most important is that nothing good can be expected from rulers while they do not feel an interest in the welfare of the people over whom they rule. The increasing prosperity of the Island, is therefore effected in spite of the government, and by means of its advantageous location, and the prosperity of the neighboring countries; an assertion with which the opinions of the most learned political economists agree.

One of the philosophers of olden times said that "truth is bitter;" and on this account, both the Spaniards of Cuba, who are strongly opposed to the independence of the country, and the Creoles, who have manifested themselves anxious to obtain it, will raise an out-cry against my Letters, and will argue that the defects which I impute to them do not exist, or are sketched in too dark colors. They will represent me as desirous of favoring one or another of the political parties; and others will perhaps think that I have published facts, the knowledge of which can be of no use, for the sole purpose of criticizing and censuring, or to make my Letters interesting, and afford amusement to my readers.

Far from fearing this censure, however, I desire it, for the very arguments which my opposers may use will serve to demonstrate the accuracy of my assertions and the impartiality of my opinions; and numerous witnesses will thus present themselves to produce unwittingly an effect precisely opposite to that which they intended.

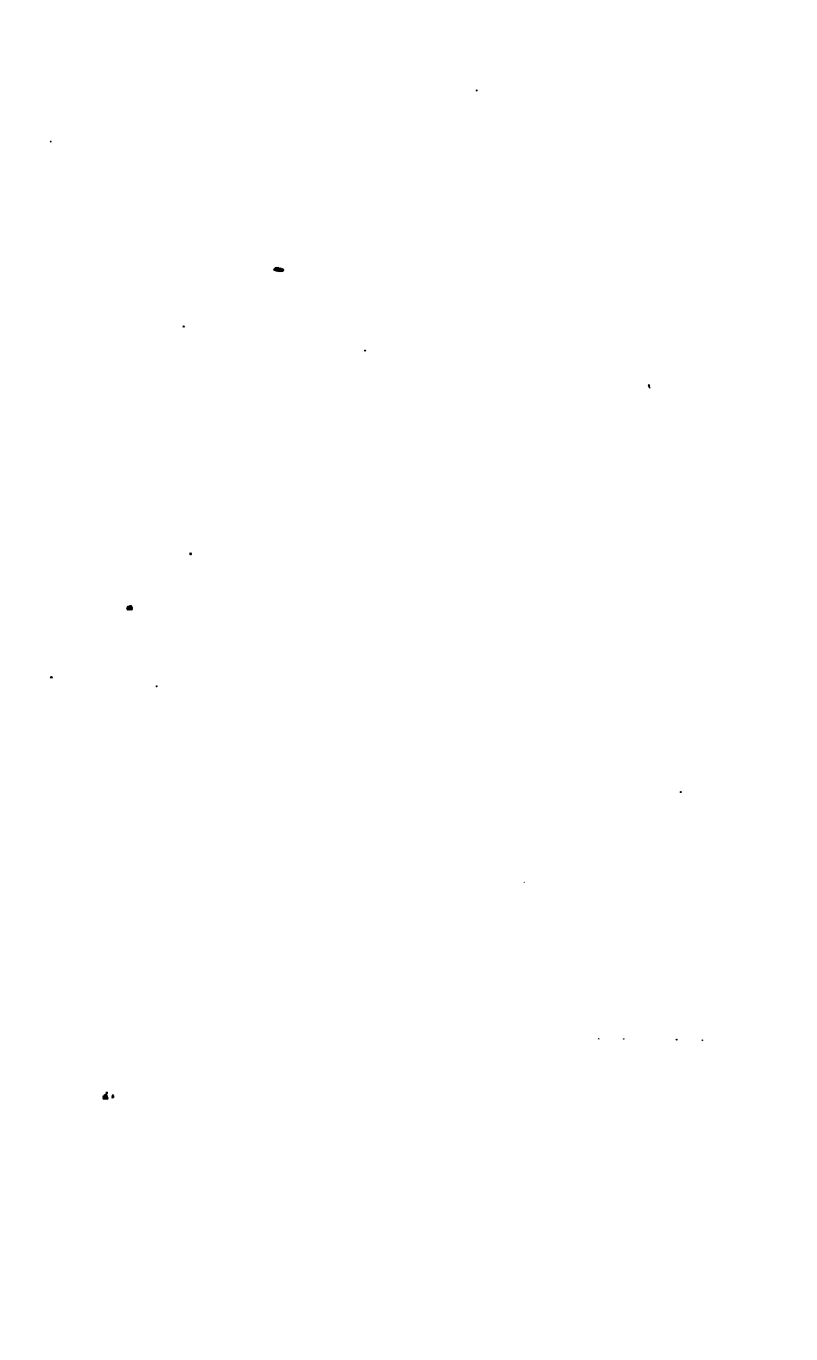
Some may question the expediency of publishing the *whole truth*; but I believe that this ought to be done whenever mankind will be benefitted thereby. I am well

aware that as there are flatterers of princes, so flatterers of nations are often found ; I am also well satisfied that in order to prosper it is almost necessary to be a flatterer, but in spite of these facts I DO NOT WISH TO BE SUCH : I am anxious to do whatever good my efforts may accomplish, and no *good* can be accomplished through *bad* means. To enable a physician to cure a disease it is necessary to lay before him the *whole* malady. The Spanish as well as the Cuban race, like all others, have faults which they should endeavor to amend ; both will, perhaps, look upon me as an enemy, but no stronger proofs of my friendship towards them can be given, than the labor I have spent and risk I have incurred of displeasing them.

It cannot be an immaterial thing to me that my true designs should be misrepresented ; and for this reason, I insist particularly on this point. Should the Cubans or Spaniards wish for any other proofs of the integrity of my motives, they will find them abundantly in my Letters. They will also see that I criticise some of our own customs, and even some of our laws, when occasion requires. Finally, on examining my conscience, I cannot but confidently expect the approbation of all honest men.

I cannot hope, however, that my work will be regarded as entirely free from errors, for some may have escaped, notwithstanding my great carefulness, my intense desire, and my unwearied diligence to secure correctness. Should any be discovered and pointed out to me, I will hasten to rectify them and to acknowledge the service with pleasure.

DEMOTICUS PHILALETHES.



LETTER I.

Arrival at Havana—Leave for landing—Precautionary measures of the Spanish government—Hotels—Medical advice for preventing and curing the yellow fever—Cuban idioms—Important observations relative to pronunciation, and other interesting facts—Necessity of concealing the names of persons concerned with the author.

MY DEAR CHARLES :

FIVE days after my departure, I arrived in the port of Havana, and could have written to you. I have not, however, done so, in order to speak to you uninfluenced by my first impressions, which are likely to be erroneous for want of deliberation. I expect I am now better prepared, and though you might think it rather late, you cannot but find that I have fulfilled my promise.

At eleven o'clock, A. M., we were passing the Morro. The trip seemed to be so short, that I thought I was yet hearing your last farewell words. After a short while, we anchored not far from the wharf called *Luz*; and I intended to go immediately into one of the *guadaños* (boats) that had surrounded the steamer on her entrance into port. My fellow-passengers, however, advised me to wait until I should obtain *leave for landing*, which could not be done before some established proceedings should be complied with. It is not so easy to land at Havana as at New York, and strangers have to submit

themselves to the *paternal* government of H. C. M. which rules the destinies of this faithful Antille, and give besides some coins to buy the right of stepping on that soil which, as the Spaniards say, is theirs: "This is ours."

I, therefore, submitted myself rather unwillingly to the law of force, complaining loudly of the ceremony. This would, undoubtedly, have brought forth a severe reprimand from the *guardias civiles* that were on board; but my language was pure English, which they fortunately did not understand.

These proceedings, as I have since been told, are not now so severe as they were a few months ago. The Spanish government, then, feared the machinations of the Fillibusters there, and thought that every steamer was, like the Trojan horse, loaded with arms directed against them, or at least with reams of revolutionary or incendiary papers to weaken the fidelity of the people and of the troops.

We had not, however, trouble of any kind, and they allowed us all to land. Then I was taken to a miserable looking hotel, which its agents represented as being the best in the city. But as I intended to stay in Havana the shortest possible time, I did not consider it of consequence. I had obtained several letters of introduction to a wealthy planter, who would send me immediately to his plantation about fifteen leagues from the city, where I had no occasion to fear the attacks of the yellow-fever. I intended to spend there the month of September, when that fearful plague begins to subside. From what I have observed, I am convinced that a regularly conducted life is almost a sure preservative, and if notwithstanding, the disease makes its appearance, its cure will be easily effected. The best method is never to take off the undershirt; always to cover well the stomach; to avoid as much as

possible the sun, and heat, as well as any agitation of the body; not to take any stimulants at meals; to drink only water, beer or wine, very moderately, and well diluted with water; to bathe only once or twice a day at the utmost; finally to live *sagement*, as the French say, and apply to a good physician as soon as the first symptoms appear. It is not necessary to entirely forego the eating of fruits; but it would be wise to swallow the juice only, as the solid part is rather too heavy for the stomach. It is also advisable not to drink cold water after being excited or agitated, or after having taken any warm beverage; and though it is rather painful, the thirst must not be quenched, until after some minutes of complete repose.

As all the guests in the hotel were Americans, and the servants spoke English, I was not in need of making use of my knowledge of the Spanish language until I went out alone in search of the house of my *future* friend, to whom I had commendatory letters. In New York I was considered as quite conversant with the language of Cervantes; but alas, my friend! Americans wishing to visit Cuba, should learn with a Cuban, and more particularly if they are business men, besides reading the best authors, if they wish to join the literati, as otherwise they will find themselves really embarrassed. My acquaintance in the United States with Spaniards from Europe, and not with *Habaneros*, had left me entirely ignorant, not only of a great many of the most commonly used words, but of several idioms and whole phrases that I had never heard before. This, together with the different pronunciation of the letters *ll*, *c*, *z*, that the Cubans pronounce like *y* and *s*, produced such a confusion in my mind, that I could scarcely understand any thing of the conversation I heard. This confusion was increased by

another cause, still more powerful, the horrible medley made by the negros, in whose mouths it might be properly said the Castilian tongue entirely disappears. I would even dare to say that idioms, among the different tribes of Africans, are almost as numerous as their nations. They, however, understand each other, and are comprehended by the whites also. Until lately, I could not, unfortunately, form a correct idea of the nature of their conversation.

As I am now speaking to you about the language, I will conclude this matter, which is by no means uninteresting. I have never seen, indeed, any thing written on the subject I am about to discuss, and it is likely that something useful to our countrymen may be found by those who read this letter. It is the fruit of my intercourse with capable persons.

The Spanish language is more delicate as spoken by the creoles than by the inhabitants of Castilla, Andalucia and other parts of the Peninsula. The causes of this are chiefly the softer sounds given to the letters above alluded to, as well as to the *j*; and also the prolonged measure with which long syllables are pronounced here. The difference is so striking, that a short phrase enables even strangers to ascertain whether the speaker is a Creole or a Castilian. The latter speak more rapidly, and end their phrases commonly with very brief syllables. The difference between them is also easily marked by the fact that Spaniards (including those that have received a high education) make frequent use of a great many interjections, and these are so indecent, that the stranger who at last becomes acquainted with their true meaning, scorns to accustom himself to such degrading language. To form an idea of the disgust produced by such a custom, it is necessary to experience the abhorrence it creates

on a well constituted mind. The censure of Pope is totally disregarded :

“Immodest words admit of no defence,

“For want of decency is want of sense.”

The idioms made use of in Cuba are almost all taken from Andalucia, and some from the other provinces of Spain, and even from France. There are some, however, the origin of which is entirely unknown, as for instance, the use of the third person of the plural instead of the second. So a Spaniard says : *¿Estais leyendo?* and a Cuban : *¿Están ustedes leyendo?* These idioms vary throughout the island. The people of Havana, Puerto Principe and Santiago de Cuba differ from each other in the pronunciation and the use of substantives.

The *Guajiros*, as the inhabitants of the rural districts are called, are those who speak the worst, with the exception of the negros. They not only pronounce badly, suppressing whole syllables, but give to the words a meaning different from their true signification. Their language, on the other hand, is an uninterrupted hyperbole. They never say, “He has a pretty horse,” but “He has the prettiest horse in the world ;” and sometimes they do not think that a single superlative is sufficient, and use two and even three together, which should not be done. In Spanish : “He wears the very largest hat ;” “He was the very poorest man ;” “Peter was more worse than his brother.” As exaggeration is never far from falsehood, I advise my readers to receive with distrust all the facts imparted to them by the *guajiros* or *monteros*, though they might not be interested in them.

Notwithstanding the grammatical errors already explained, I can assure you that the knowledge of the principles of the Spanish language is very general among Cubans ; but in common conversation it is considered a

very ridiculous affectation to use proper words instead of provincialisms, as also the correct pronunciation; so that the few young men of this island, brought up in Spain, have to adopt that of the country as soon as they return, to avoid being the subject of their countrymen's jests.

I have been very often disappointed in using pure Castilian. In one instance I asked for *manteca*, meaning *butter*, and they gave me *lard*; and in another, I wanted *berzas*, which they did not understand, as I ought to have used the word *coles*, &c. These are similar to many differences between Englishmen and ourselves; but I rather think they are far more considerable between Cubans and Spaniards;—in fact, they are as great as those which exist in their political opinions.

Let me now discard philology and write on other matters. I would like to describe, in the first place, my interview with my *recomendado*; and it must not appear strange to you that I do not mention his name, because were you to publish it, as well as his opinions, which I shall have to expose, he would be surely sent to live in Spain, without any other cause or ceremony than a verbal order of Señor Concha. Such punishment is considered here as bad as being incarcerated in the Tombs; and little less than the *garrote*. I will therefore designate my *recomendado*, and all persons whom I shall have to mention, under fictitious names, and will not describe faithfully many places in order to avoid the danger resulting therefrom.

I cannot conclude this letter without acquainting you; that in future communications I hope to transmit for your perusal, interesting essays on men, manners and matters in general, connected with this beautiful and fruitful Island.

LETTER II.

Dresses—Carriages (*volantes* and *quitrines*)—Drivers (*caleseros*)—
Their abusive conduct—A ridiculous journey—Best mode of
paying the drivers—Advice to fashionable ladies as to the use
of hackney coaches—Pedestrianism never exercised—Strong
reasons for it—Useless attempts of the Captain-Generals' wives
to avoid the perpetual employment of carriages.

I HAD landed, dressed after the New-York fashion, but following my host's advice, I put on the dress commonly used here, to conceal as much as possible the *Yankee* aspect, as all Americans are called by that name. The dress consists of silk or linen clothing, except the coat, which is sometimes made of cloth, as well as the pantaloons, requisite in cold days. Cotton stockings are commonly worn by those who cannot afford to have silk ones; boots or high shoes, are very seldom seen, and flannel is used by few. I went out, therefore, after obtaining some necessary information, dressed after the Creoles' fashion. I did not accept the services of an interpreter, who are by no means abundant, more on account of a desire to take advantage of my Spanish, than from economical views.

I needed a carriage, as the distance (less than a mile) was pronounced great. The Hotel was near the wharf, and my *recomendado* lived out of the city walls. I called a *calesero de alquiler* (driver), and told him, on going

into the carriage, "Calle de la Reina" (*Reina street*). He did not answer, and turning his hand round, struck the horse most vigorously three or four times with the whip. The poor animal seemed scarcely able to support its negro rider, together with the ponderous saddle of fifty or more pounds in which he was hooked. We were running, however, at great speed, and I laughed at the ridiculous appearance of my equipage, thinking what my friends would have said, had they seen me thus "*fixed*" in Broadway.

Just fancy a very old and worn out thin-looking horse, with two ulcers in the breast, in the same place which supports the collar ; its long braided tail forming an arch, the end of which was tied to a button at the back of the saddle with a hempen string ; the reins two ropes, and the saddle lining torn out in several places, so that the hair with which it was stuffed could be seen. The uncleanness of the driver was still greater than that of the horse, if that could be excelled. He had on a very old broken and bruised straw hat ; a jacket full of large patches and holes ; a shirt almost as black as its owner's skin ; boots *sui generis*, that I had never seen before, and which wonderfully supported from its under side, by means of a strap, some old hanging shoes ; and neither cravat nor waistcoat. Besides this, think of the unpleasant noise produced by the badly adjusted pieces of the carriage, which, with the motion, seemed to separate, break off, and sink with me at every revolution of the wheels, either when they fell in deep holes or whirled over large pieces of stone, that unfortunately were very frequently met with on the road ; and lastly, the continual contortions made by the negro, with his body on all sides of the saddle, accompanied by heavy blows with the whip, and indecent shouts.

I was completely bewildered by the peculiarity of my situation, and the novelty of my *progress*. I was not only ashamed of my appearance, but indignant at the conduct of the negro for his cruelty towards the jaded beast, and the obscenity of his language. The worst of it is, that, as far as I have observed, they use the same epithets without regard to the class of passengers they carry. The conversation of the negroes is truly intolerable; and the countess of Merlin, in her small work on the customs of Havana, had already remarked that there could not be chaste ears in this capital.

My indignation increased against the driver, when on arriving at the end of my journey, I stretched my hand and offered him one *peseta* (20 cents) which is the lawful charge; but he refused to take it, and asked one *doblon* (\$4.25). They assuredly make careless strangers, or those who do not care for money, pay it; but I was well posted up in these matters, and throwing the coin inside the *volante*, went towards the door of the house for which I was looking. The negro alighting from the horse, rushed towards me in a state of madness, shouting a deluge of words that I did not understand, and which were, probably, disgustingly obscene expressions. I thought he was going to assault me, and raising my cane I stepped forward; he then went backward, and believing that he was already satisfied, I intended to enter; but he came again, his anger having subsided, begging with hat in hand. I then drew one *peseta* more, whereupon he bowed, and went to take the other that was in the *volante*. So my journey ended, and according to the general opinion, had it not been for that spontaneous movement of raising the cane, the negro would have grossly insulted me in spite of the *Bando de buen gobierno* (Police regulations). The *guardias civiles* (policemen), it is said, take

care only to vex the people, and watch all their actions and words to represent them as fillibusters, or at least as suspected persons, to Francisco Garcia Muñoz, first spy of Her Catholic Majesty, in her almost only dominion in America.

As I have already spoken of vehicles, I will continue this subject, hoping that it will be useful to our countrymen who may happen to read this, and come afterwards to the island. There is, as in New York, a tariff for hackney carriages, and it is even provided that a printed copy be fixed inside. As policemen, however, are not always at hand, it would be convenient to carry a cane, taking care that it be thinner than the thumb, as thicker ones are prohibited, and the owner runs the risk of forfeiture and a fine. In spite, however, of this regulation, there is scarcely a carriage with this tariff, and it would be well to obtain all the necessary information before hiring one. It must be noticed that drivers are in the habit of plundering strangers; that they know them at once, even in their manner of walking, and that before letting them enter their carriage, they extort from them monstrous prices. It is, therefore, expedient not to make any previous bargain, but let them fall in the trap set by themselves; feigning to yield to their exactions, pay them the regular price and raise the cane, as I did, if they intend to attack. For long journeys, taking many hours, it is better, though dearer, to hire a carriage at the *stables*; they are more genteel, and the prices are also limited beforehand. This is the best way to prevent being imposed upon by the drivers, and of avoiding a quarrel with these insolent plunderers; it has also the advantage of making the person be considered *better off*, as in common ones it is rather ridiculous to be seen in the street or in the *paseo* (promenade). I advise American ladies never to hire any other

than those kept at the stables, and to be particular to tell the owners to send good and decent ones, without which they would not be taken. They must not even think of going on foot, though the distance be only two blocks; it is not considered genteel, not only on account of the narrow, dirty streets, without sidewalks, but also from the risk of meeting blasphemous, *odorous*, and drunken negroes. It is generally believed that the reluctance of the ladies of Havana to walk in the streets arises from extravagance or excessive pride, but it is only a necessity. Besides the inconveniencies already referred to, they are exposed to insults in a country where men think they are entitled to address a lady whom they have never seen before, and tell her unceremoniously: "How handsome you are!" This is a Spanish custom: a lady at Madrid considers herself as almost despised, if on passing before a cluster of young men, she does not receive from them a *requiebro* or *dichito* (endearing expresion), and although it is not the same in Havana, these compliments are not received as indignantly and contemptuously as their bad taste warrants.

Ladies have been induced to walk in the streets: the wives of some Captain-generals (believing that they were going to be imitated) have endeavoured to introduce that fashion, alighting from the carriage in the promenades; but they have been disappointed, the example not having been followed; the objections being powerful. A proof of this, is, that in the wider and less crowded streets out of the walls, it is not uncommon to see ladies on foot. It is said, as a very remarkable instance, that the wife of Captain-General Roncali used to go very often on foot to Lombard's furniture warehouse, a few steps only from the palace.

LETTER III.

A warm reception—Impossibility of publishing the Amphytryon's name—His family—A jealous mother—Curious anecdotes—Danger of being poisoned—Post mortem examinations—Vengeance of slaves — Frightful cases — Interest of masters in concealing the crimes of their negros.

I **DECLINE** describing to you what is easy to be conceived; my warm reception, delivery of my credentials, introduction to the family, &c.; but it is only just to say that I was very affectionately welcomed, and was received as if I had been an old friend. In less than half an hour, I considered myself already as at home, and such was our intimacy, that they laughed at the blunders I made in my Spanish. The raillery of the young ladies was pleasingly provoking; they seemed determined to "go ahead," until I partially silenced their mischievous little batteries by the discharge of a few New England anecdotes, which excited their winning smiles and risible faculties.

It is truly painful to me that I am restricted from giving publicity to the name of my affectionate Amphytryon, and his amiable family. I am fearful of disclosures, and it is necessary to have patience, until I return and whisper it to you. You cannot imagine how deep my gratitude is for the great benefits I have received in this

house, and I should never end this letter, were I to describe them.

The family consisted of two male and three female children ; but that day ten persons sat at the table, as two fresh visitants had arrived after me. We had no appetite, on account of having indulged in fruits, more particularly in anones, which, according to Mariano Velazquez de la Cadena, is "the most delicious American fruit," and dinner was neglected for a sociable chat. Some times we could not understand each other as I made inquiries about Cuba, and they, before answering, put questions to me respecting the United States. The general conversation was afterwards divided into two branches : my host and the two strangers began at once to discuss the endless Cuba question, and the other were asking and answering trifles. The separation was made with regard to ages, and we talked accordingly ; the lady, however, was on our side ; she presided over it, and paid particular attention to our narrations, with that interest, which shows the diffident vigilance of a jealous mother.

The attention of the juvenile side was quickly directed to the conversation of the old gentlemen, who had pronounced in their discussion the name of a person whose "upper ten style " had amazed the city in those days ; not on account of its been seldom seen, but for the ignorance of the origin of so much sudden wealth. The public curiosity had been naturally excited to ascertain its source, and after many inquiries and conjectures, it was believed that a clue had been found to the mystery in the perpetration of a horrible crime, supposed to have been committed on an uncle of his, a few years before, by the suddenly rich person, aided by a cousin, who also became wealthy. The story is too long for a letter, and I must forego its recital. It may be deduced from it, however, that a

person can be poisoned in Havana, with little effort being made for the discovery of the perpetrator, even if the victim has had the most alarming symptoms, and there are strong grounds for suspicion against the people by whom the sufferer was surrounded.

I made several inquiries, and was alarmed at the apathy exhibited by the authorities, on learning that as judges are not paid for prosecutions in criminal cases, unless urged by any of the parties, they only act when pressed by them. I learned also, that the relatives of the dead are very often prevented from doing it on account of the costs, which are considerable in instances of this kind. Cases of poisoning by revengeful slaves are, therefore, very common, and their victims go to the grave, it being believed that they have suffered a natural death; and, as the pecuniary interest of the new owners or heirs is in opposition to the discovery of the crime and the punishment of the slave, if found guilty, they, instead of promoting the inquest, endeavour to lessen the suspicions, in order not to lose his value, as they do not receive any compensation if the slave is garroted. It is not long since the wife of a lawyer, named Valdes Faulí, died with all the symptoms of poisoning, and it was not till some months afterwards that her death by arsenic was discovered, on account of a quarrel that took place between the guilty parties, who denounced each other in such a manner as to preclude all possibility of concealing the fact. This discovery cost the lawyer two or three negroes, who were garroted in Havana. If the value of the slaves were defrayed by the public treasury, the cause for concealment would no longer exist.

Another case has been related to me, which proves how great is the risk of the owners in becoming accomplices by concealing the crimes of their slaves, in order not

to lose their labor. A widow lady (whose name I do not mention, as her sons might suffer by it), whipped a negro boy, about 14 or 15 years old. The same day she was attacked by dysentery, and no other cause could be assigned for it than a cup of coffee and milk that the negro had brought to her. She suspected, and having frightened him in order to obtain a confession, he acknowledged that he had put some powders in the coffee, which, *a man passing by the street had given to him*. This last was certainly false, as his other confessions showed; and he only made it, believing that he was thereby exculpated. The lady died the following day; she was buried without any inquest being held; the sons sent the negro to the plantation, and punished him by flogging; loaded him with irons, and condemned him to work always shackled. This punishment evinces that the owners believed in the guilt of the negro. They did not want, notwithstanding, to lose him, though their mother was the victim! It seems incredible that in a people who claim to be civilized, such a state of things should prevail, openly opposing duty to conveniency; interesting in the concealment of crimes the persons who are most able to effect their discovery.

In the few hours that this dinner and conversation lasted, I became acquainted with the history of Havana, and current events; I also learned much of the Creole language; and I even dare to say that I thought I had become so accustomed to the climate, as to be out of reach of the attacks of the yellow-fever, taking into consideration how familiar I was with all the customs of the capital of the *Slave Queen* of the Antilles.

LETTER IV.

Courting ladies at the windows—The *young lady*, (*niña*) though she may be *old*—Specimens of amatory epistles—A witty answer—*Spanking* through the newspapers—Marriages—Object of the Spaniards in marrying—Dispensations from the Bishop or Pope to allow the marriage of near relations—Aristocracy—Easy mode of high ennoblement—Purchased titles—Fidelity of wives—Virtue of the Cuban ladies—Antipathies between Cubans and Spaniards.

DURING that dinner, I spoke to you of in my last letter, I was observing, while talking, a scene that was taking place near the iron grates of the opposite house, and which I will not omit, as it describes the habits of the people in love matters. A very well dressed young man, was speaking from the outside with a very pretty young lady, who was standing at one of the corners of the window. The lover was in such a position that those persons who were in the parlor of the young lady's house could not see him. Sometimes it happened that one of them approached the window; she then gave notice to the young man, who would immediately start and stop at the corner of the block, staying there watching. As soon as the risk was over, he would come slowly to his post in order to continue

his interrupted conversation. What a troublesome way of courting a lady! I gave notice to the others of what was passing, and it afforded me much information as to what I am about to communicate. Sometimes this is seen in each of the windows of the one-story houses, and it is not very uncommon to see two in each! This generally occurs when the suitor is not *admitted* in the house, on account of not having had an introduction, or when the parents of the girl disapprove the acquaintance of their daughter with the suitor. As unmarried young ladies do not go out alone, they have no opportunities of communicating with their lovers, and they avail themselves, therefore, of the only one possible. This method, however, is generally condemned, and avoided, even by the young men, who fear to *depreciate the character of the lady of their thoughts*. If they cannot visit them, they take advantage of all opportunities of seeing them in public places, viz. at church, or at a common friend's house. The chief resource made use of is an epistolary correspondence, in which the negros, or servant girls of the *niña* (young lady) act as mediators. That name is generally given by way of tenderness to unmarried young ladies, or even to those who are married, provided their parents are living; these are called *los viejos* ("the old folks"), though they may be young. I have seen some of these amatory letters, and they have afforded me much amusement. They are very funny; the love-stricken heroes put their oratorical resources to the stretch; they exhaust their erudition, and create the greatest hyperboles to show the vehemence of their passions, and make most impossible promises. One of these letters has become so widely known for its ludicrous style and incredible nonsense, that there are many persons who know it by heart. I have a copy of it and of some others; and though I have tried to make a trans-

lation, I have given up the idea as far beyond my capability. It commences thus :

STA. INCOMPARABLE:

Los concéntricos, enfáticos i acatalécticos disturbios que turriburizan la llama de mi simpático y armónico cariño, &c., &c.

Another, from an ardent student in physics, a little less ridiculous, begins thus: "Miss: Your beautiful image had scarcely struck my retina by means of the convergent rays, when my cava vena was filled with hot blood, as if I had tasted the nectar of the Gods, or the heavenly Ambrosia, &c." It is said that a lover, not trusting his own resources, and not being of an inventive mind, sent to his sweet-heart an abstract of a certain letter from Rousseau's "Nouvelle Eloise." The niña who was acquainted with that volume, answered in these words: "In page . . . of the same book from which yours was copied, you will find the answer." It is useless to say, that in Havana the Muses are also invoked for these cases, as they are in the United States. The censorship allows it, because everything that is not of a political character is deemed good, though the manners may be thereby corrupted and the people brutalized. I am told that *endearments* of this kind are kept up for years, and do not always end with marriage. It is not uncommon for the lover to disappoint his bride under frivolous pretexts, on account of natural inconstancy or for a more *golden* prospect. But it is only just to say in favor of the fair sex of Havana, that I have not heard of a single instance of the lady having been inconstant, and if it has ever happened that she has dismissed the lover, there has always been a powerful motive, and in most cases it has been on account of his infidelity.

Cubans, generally speaking, marry rather late; the men usually when about thirty years old, and the women when twenty-two or twenty-five. You will be perhaps surprised

at this fact, as I have been, particularly if you take into account the influence of the climate, and desire to have it explained; but I do not dare to undertake a disquisition that I deem exceedingly difficult, and for which I confess myself entirely unprepared. The Creole young men, if I am not mistaken, are more disinterested in the selection of their brides, than the creole women are of their bridegrooms, and they yield more easily to the impulse of love; but young ladies keep more in view some other considerations, as wealth, and this not so particularly as *birth*. It is quite the reverse with Spaniards from the Peninsula, who only want to make a good bargain, and nothing deters them. If the lady is rich, no other qualification is requisite. Cuban young ladies prefer to marry their countrymen, and it is not before losing all hopes of doing so, that they accept the *patones* (long and flat-footed Spaniards), as they call them. I could produce many instances to prove this assertion; of which I have not the least doubt. The marriages *tratados* (those effected by the parents from interested views, without consulting the taste of their daughters), are more common than what is generally believed. No compulsory cases, however, of parents towards their children are seen; at least the violence is not an open one. They make use, notwithstanding, of indirect means, as for instance, not allowing their daughters any intercourse but with those persons who they think are suitable to them. Hence the frequency of marriages between near relations, and as these are prohibited by the canons, it is necessary to apply to the Bishop, and in many instances even to the Pope, to obtain the leave (*dispensa*). This is not granted, however, without giving a sum of money that increases when the kindred is nearer. The denials of parents to allow their daughters to marry, are oftener seen than their compulsion; and they are sometimes made without

any cause, but more frequently with strong motives for the determination.

This opposition is useless, as the law blindly protects marriages, generally even when there are probabilities of their being unfortunate. The Captain Generals have authority to supply the consent of the parents, after ascertaining in a very summary way the causes of their dissent. The reason of the *disenso* (disagreement) commonly originates from difference of rank between the gentleman and lady; and this name is given to the positions they occupy in the scale of aristocracy.

The people of Cuba are most fastidious and intolerant on this point. There is nothing, however, so difficult to prove in Havana as an inferior degree of nobility. The most plebeian, on going to Spain and taking with him some *dobloons*, can obtain letters patent of nobility, which prove that he is twenty or thirty times (according to the amount of money he wishes to spend) more noble than his opponent, though it may be a notorious fact that he is a mulatto or quarteron. I could name over half a dozen of *títulos de Castilla* belonging to this class.

Marriages are happy; with very few exceptions, the wife never fails to fulfil her duties; quite the reverse of what happens in Spain, where conjugal fidelity is an exception. The Cuban ladies are highly virtuous; they love their husbands and children, and sacrifice to them the affections they had before marriage; they love to nurture their offspring themselves, and only employ nurses when they are unable to fulfil that maternal duty; they dislike and strenuously refuse to separate from them, but are always ready to do it when the object of their separation is their education and improvement.

Though literary instruction is not common among them, they nevertheless possess the knowledge necessary to the

mother of a family, and many superintend extensive business, as satisfactorily as those of the household, to which they attend at the same time. A lavish woman is very seldom met with ; they are economical, yet not stingy, and they very seldom refuse giving alms, even when they doubt of the sincerity of the solicitor.

In regard to patriotism, I would dare to say that when they are not married to Spaniards, they surpass the men ; and even then, if they have republican children, they sometimes belong to their party. The most common occurrence, however, in these cases, is their becoming neutral and conciliatory in their party quarrels.

You will easily imagine that this sketch of the Cuban ladies cannot be applied to all ; but if we examine well the exceptions, we shall find motives to confirm the rule, instead of doing the injustice of generalizing by them ; and at the same time we shall experience a feeling of admiration at their not being more prevalent. This is the cause why *scandalous stories* produce more effect here than in other places, where, from their frequent occurrence, they are scarcely mentioned.

You may, perhaps, remark that I speak more of what I have been told, than of what I have observed. and in doing this you would not be entirely right. It is true that I could not have learnt much in so short a time, but it is a fact, that my own observations and the particulars obtained from other persons have confirmed what I had before ascertained.

I will not close this letter without relating to you a scene that took place during my first visit, and which might seem unimportant. The house was already lighted, and we were amusing ourselves with a lively chat, when a Spaniard, a merchant, and an old friend of the family, made his appearance. You cannot imagine the change

that suddenly took place, not only in the conversation, which became reserved and tedious, but also in the countenances of the colloquists. The girls left their seats, and in order to make them return, the lady had to send messages to them by a little negro girl; the young men spoke to me only; the "old folks" yawned and looked angrily at the Spaniard, and only the father kept up the discourse with him, not without evincing his displeasure. What a marked antipathy! There is no doubt that Creoles and Spaniards live here as dogs and cats locked up in the same cage!

LETTER V.

System of Agriculture—Land surveying—Staple productions—Slaves
—Their rights as compared with those of the United States
—Sugar plantations (*ingenios*).

I HAVE been in several plantations of different sizes and kinds, and I shall make a few remarks concerning the agriculture of this island.

Notwithstanding the commercial intercourse with the States, agricultural pursuits here are as yet very imperfect, as you will perceive by the following hasty review.

The awards of land were made by *Mercedes*, that is, title-deeds given by the common council of the districts where they were located. They were granted under certain conditions, for raising cattle, and were called *haciendas* or *corrales*; the first named being circular areas of four leagues diameter (less than twenty thousand yards), and the others two leagues diameter. As the boundaries are circles, there are always between them gores called *realengos*, which belong to the exchequer, and of which a portion is given to the person who first discovers their existence. But, as those who originally received the *mercedes* located themselves too near each other, the circles overlap the adjacent ones, and these are called *segmentos* or *lenticulas*. Hence innumerable law-suits arise, as also an

inequality in the distribution of property, as surveyors generally very imperfectly understand their business, and do not set out circles, but very awkward polygons, which cause endless disputes relative to boundaries.

Besides the bad shape of these large estates, they have another disadvantage, that is, their extent; only a very small portion of them is cultivated, and the balance is left with the grass growing on it, which dries up as soon as the drought commences, and hence the great yearly mortality of cattle. In both these large farms, cattle, hogs and horses are raised, as well as poultry, some sheep and a very few goats. As there are no fences, the only way of ascertaining the stock which belongs to each proprietor, is to *mark*, at certain periods of the year, the different species found inside the boundaries. They are rented out, and the price is regulated by the number of animals contained; it being the duty of the farmer to deliver at the expiration of the lease, the same number that he received; so that he sells the best in order to obtain a higher price, and only leaves those of an inferior kind.

Nowhere in this island is the operation of hay-making understood. In the rainy season there is too much pasture, and in droughts great scarcity is experienced; so that it may be properly said, that the animals grow wild without receiving any attention from men. So far is this true, that there is not in these farms a single stable or shed, where herds could find a shelter, and their only protection from rain, or the excessive heat, is what they can find themselves under the trees. This system is not so prejudicial in Cuba, as in other countries where wild beasts are common, as the only enemy of cattle here, is the wild dog, and this is not very abundant.

In the *haciendas* and *corrales*, they only raise corn, rice, tobacco and vegetables in a sufficient quantity to support

the persons living on the estate. From ten to twelve acres are commonly set apart for a field of *platanos* (bananas), and as much more for one of sweet potatoes. Corn is sometimes sown, furrowing the ground once with its natural grass on, and three or four seeds are thrown in at every thirty or thirty-six inches; this distance is commonly left between the furrows. Shortly after sowing, all the grass is removed by means of short *cutlasses*, called here *machetes de calabozo*. When the plant is two feet high, its sides are covered with earth by means of a hoe, and the field is sometimes, though rarely, cleaned again with the cutlass. The ground in other places is prepared, after the months of March and April, by passing the plough twice over it, and furrowing just before depositing the seed. A month after this, the field is cleared and the earth removed by passing the plough between every two furrows. One *caballeria*, that is, about thirty-three and a half acres, commonly yields one hundred *fanegas* (100000 ears) of large size, and about ten or twelve of small size ears.

Rice requires greater care and preparation, and is more profitable than corn, when rains are abundant and timely. There are no machines to peel it, and those driven by hand, brought from the States, have not given satisfaction. They use a large wooden mortar made out of the trunk of a tree, where the rice is put and pounded by a man with a heavy pestle, with much trouble and a slowness that is easy to imagine.

The plough used here is very simple, though it does not answer the purpose well. It has only one piece of iron, that is, the plough-share. It is drawn by two oxen driven by a man, with a rope attached to the gristle of the animal's nose. A solid and inflexible yoke is tightly tied by ropes to the horns and foreheads of both animals, and

that their heads are firmly united, and cannot be moved without dragging that of the other.

/ When haciendas are (*demolidas*) set apart for cultivation, they are divided in parcels of several *caballerías*, or eighteen *cordeles* square, each of which is twenty-four varas long. On these lots the sugar plantations (*ingenios*), the pasture grounds (*potreros*), and the farms (*sitios* or *estancias*) are set out. The first take commonly forty *caballerías* and yield according to their *dotaciones* or number of slaves, and the quantity of sugar cane sown, from three hundred to twelve thousand or more boxes of sugar yearly. The average crop, is about two thousand boxes, which is commonly made with one hundred negros. The product of each *caballería* varies from one thousand to three thousand *arrobas* (twenty-five pounds each) of sugar. In order to avoid recapitulating what is already published I shall omit the description of the process for manufacturing sugar, and shall only refer to peculiarities, with which it is not likely you are acquainted.

The negros are divided into two gangs, in order to work all night, and to avoid the want of fresh hands. The gang which works for instance, from twelve o'clock on Monday night to four o'clock, A.M. on Tuesday morning, goes on working to twelve o'clock at night of the same day, so that they do not sleep in twenty-four hours, while the other gang has slept twice in the same time. This inconvenience could be easily avoided if each gang would work during the same hours every week; but I have been told that the slaves prefer the other arrangement.

In the sugar plantations, where negros are well treated, the following rules are observed.

At *Ave Maria*, that is, shortly before sunrise a bell is rung, and the negros go out of their *bohios* or lodgings to prepare the oxen for the carts, to begin cutting down the

cane, and perform the business of the sugar house. Nearly all those who go to the field take with them some plantains kept from their allowance of the day before or found by themselves. The work continues uninterruptedly till noon; when they go again to the houses (*batei*) after hearing the bell, where they have a release of two hours, and dinner is given to them either cooked or raw. It consists of a piece of *tasajo brujo* (jerked beef), or dry codfish, weighing about four or six ounces, with some plantains and sweet potatoes. Many slaves prefer to take their dinner raw, though they may have the trouble of cooking it afterwards, as they are then able to sell it to the Catalonians, who usually keep taverns in the vicinity. These *exemplary innkeepers* retail, with an easy conscience, the articles stolen from the estates by the negros.

In some plantations, another allowance is given to them, either before commencing their labors in the morning, or when they retire at night. At sunset, the *oracion* is rung, and the work in the field is suspended to continue inside the buildings all night. The drivers tie the oxen to stakes driven in the same ground, where the cane has been cut during the day, in order to enable them to eat the shoots that have been left on it, and which constitute the principal food of these animals during the *zafra* (crop).

The grinding in some plantations, ceases on Friday, and in others on Saturday night; the work, however, continues on Sunday till nine or ten o'clock in the morning, when a recess is granted till five or six P. M., at which time, the mill (*trapiche*) begins to work again.

A parcel of land (*conuco*) is allotted to each negro every year, the products of which belong to him: it is devoted to the cultivation of rice, ochra, peanut, beneseed, &c., during his leisure hours. Besides Sundays, there are many days throughout the year when all work is suspended.

They are denominated *fiesta entera*, and are marked in the Almanac with a double cross. Slaves are also allowed to raise a pig, poultry, sometimes a mare, and they can freely dispose of their stock. Many have amassed sufficient money to liberate their wives and children, and even themselves. When work is pressing, a bargain is made with the slaves to labor during the hours of recess of the festival days, for fifty cents each. This is also the price allowed them for about a cord of wood cut during their own time. Twice or three times a year, a shirt and pantaloons of sheeting are given to each negro, and a gown to the women. At Christmas a blanket or woollen jacket is also given to them. From time to time, *tobacco scraps* are distributed for the pipe, and after having been exposed to rain, a small glass of *aguardiente de caña* (brandy) is administered, as a preventive to disease.

Slaves in Cuba have certain rights of which they are deprived in the United States. Among the municipal authorities the *síndico* takes the responsibility of seeing that these rights are fully enjoyed, and he cannot exact any thing from the negros, though they may possess property. He can compel the owner to give the negro permission for three days, to look for another master, without his being obliged to assign the cause. If the price asked is considered too high by the *síndico*, appraisers are appointed by both parties to regulate it. The slave may at any time give to his master fifty or more dollars on account of the price of his freedom, and require him to declare what that price is, as it cannot be raised afterwards from any cause. Negros, who have given this amount, are called *coartados*; they are entitled to have certain days to themselves, and are sometimes allowed to work on their own account by paying to the master one shilling daily for each one hundred dollars of their price. Negros

having offspring by female slaves, purchase their freedom by paying from fifty to one hundred dollars after the birth, and the owner cannot prevent the mother from exercising her maternal duty. It is by no means uncommon to meet with slaves who, having the requisite amount of money do not want to obtain liberty; and this, strange as it may appear, is sometimes seen even with negroes devoted to the labors of the sugar plantations, which are considered the most distressing. Some have the singular pleasure of keeping all their savings in earthenware pots (*botijas*), hidden under the earth, and they sometimes die carrying the secret with them. Another rare occurrence is, that while domestic servants are punished by sending them to the plantations for a certain length of time, those who belong to the estates consider it almost as a punishment to be sent to Havana. I asked the cause of this of a negro who had been given to me as a guide, and who was on a mule before my horse. He answered, that in the country they were not always under the eye of the master, as it happened in the cities. He told me also that he greatly preferred belonging to a sugar, than to a coffee plantation, though in the latter labor was not so hard, as in the former food was to be found anywhere.

LETTER VI.

Coffee estates (*Cafetales*). — Pasture grounds (*Potreros*). — Farms (*Sitios*).—Orchards (*Estancias*).—Colored population.

THE cultivation of coffee was entirely abandoned several years ago, in so much that many coffee plantations have been sold without the negros, for the value of the land, giving gratis the crops, fences and buildings, which amounted to a considerable sum. When coffee sold for twenty and even for twenty-four dollars a cwt., these plantations were an ornament to the island, as they were in fact large and beautiful gardens. The product of 200000 trees in abundant years was considered to be one thousand cwts.; but the following year this product was only one half or less. Each *caballeria* was divided into four squares, and in each of these, ten thousand trees were planted in perfectly straight rows, from fifty-eight to sixty inches apart, in every way, and left growing till about four feet high, when they were pruned and kept always of that height. At regular distances, fruit trees were planted, though it was more common to make rows on the side streets (*guardarayas*), the borders of which were sown with *yerba de guinea*, answering the double purpose of pasture and ornament. After the coffee-tree was planted, no other care was bestowed upon it than to take away the grass, and to heap vegetable remains round

its trunk as manure. Few planters removed the earth before this process. The grain was exposed to the sun to dry perfectly and taken afterwards to a mill made of a heavy vertical wheel, which passing over it separated the shell; thence it was carried to a fan-mill (*aventador*) which blew off the shell, and the berries being then assorted to form the different classes of *primera*, *caracolillo* and *triache*, were thrown into bags, which were well filled.

The *potreros* are devoted to breeding hogs, poultry, horses or cattle. The best food for the first named is the fruit of the *palma real* (*palmiche*), the roots and the grass. They are fattened with corn, and care is taken to kill some of the young pigs to enable the sow to raise more easily her litter. A large and badly built hut is commonly made for the chickens, and sticks are laid across at different heights for them to perch upon. On the ground nests are placed for their eggs. As the gates are open in the forenoon they lay mostly on the grass, by which a great many are lost; and as there are no enclosures for young chickens, many are killed by the *majá* (a snake), the wild dogs, or the showers.

In regard to the rearing of mules and horses, very few bestow on it the required care and attention. There are some nevertheless of good qualities and at low prices, as a serviceable team may be bought for one hundred dollars, and I have not heard of any having cost over five hundred. Some saddle horses sell for the latter price, and a few for something higher. Horses from the United States do not obtain high prices, as they require much more care and expense, and do not endure the climate as well as those raised on the island.

Less attention is still paid to the rearing of cattle, as I do not know of any pains being taken to obtain good stock to improve the species.

The product of a cow amounts to little, as the scarcity of easy communications makes it almost worthless. The cheese manufactured is lightly estimated, and the heavy tax of from seven to nine dollars exacted by the exchequer for each animal that is slaughtered for consumption, after its owner has been obliged to pay tithes, swallows all the profits of the breeder. These estates are, therefore but slightly profitable.

Sitios are only *potreros* on a small scale, of from one half to four or six *caballerias* of land. Those who cultivate them are commonly lessees, who are happy to be able to pay the rent after living miserably. In some of these farms the *yuca* is largely cultivated for the manufacture of *casabe*, which is a kind of bread made in circular slices of about twelve inches in diameter, and about one twelfth or one-sixth of an inch in thickness. Its consumption was formerly quite considerable, though it is now of little importance. It is sold for three or five cents each *torta* or slice.

Estancias are orchards, which furnish a supply of vegetables to the neighboring towns. Those in the vicinity of Havana are very profitable, as they find a ready sale for every thing produced in them, as vegetables, fruits, flowers &c., &c. Hence the high prices obtained for these lands, which being worth on an average four or five hundred dollars per *caballeria* throughout the island, reach in these places four, five, and even seven thousand dollars. As manures are indispensable to them, more industry is exercised in their cultivation, though not much care is bestowed on the preparation of fertilizers.

A great deal has been lately written on Cuba, but more especially on the system of slavery, the slave trade, and whatever relates to this race, and it would be easy to produce a large octavo without any other trouble than

quoting musty volumes; but I will only tell you, what I have myself observed.

The colored population of the island is estimated now at over seven hundred thousand, in which number the free negroes are included, amounting to an insignificant proportion. The free negroes in the towns are journey-men laborers; many are artisans, few have shops, and fewer still are proprietors of small houses. It is not uncommon for them to know how to read and even write, but they only commonly attain an imperfect knowledge of these important requisites. The great majority of negroes are addicted to vice; few evince a virtuous disposition. Very few amass even a moderate competence, as they commonly waste their earnings and first savings, and no considerable amount of money ever falls into their hands, unless they chance to inherit it, or draw a prize in the lottery. Their wants are few; and they consider themselves happy if they can barely subsist, drink spirituous liquors, smoke and dance on Sundays. The native negroes are far less economical than those brought from Africa, who are commonly very stingy, and who sometimes die from sheer want of nourishment by the side of their *botijas* full of money. Free negroes and mulattos in the country are just the contrary of those of the same class in the towns. They are hard-working, honorable and honest; some take farms on lease, which they cultivate with care and judgment; their wives and children aid them; and though a wealthy negro is seldom seen in the country, yet many live in comparative comfort, despite the vexations they receive from the *capitanes de partido* (judges of the district), and *cabos deronda* (foremen of the night patrols), who plunder them to the utmost extent by pretexts and infamous exactions.

LETTER VII.

Rural Journeymen (*guajiros*)—Overseers (*mayorales*)—Sagacity of their dogs—Runaway negroes—The famous negro named *Notary Public* (*escribano*)—Conflict between an overseer and a negro.

THE *Guajiros*, that I have already named, deserve a more extended description, as very little has been written as far as my knowledge goes, in comparison with what their condition merits.

Journeymen are employed as overseers or administrators of plantations, sugar makers (*maestros de azúcar*), muleteers, or keepers of oxen in the sugar estates, pasture grounds, &c. They do not commonly know how to read, and seldom occupy the place of administrators. On many estates, however, they act as such, though the name of overseer is given to them. A steward is then necessary to keep accounts, and the correspondence with the owners. He is commonly a Spaniard, who understands something about reading and writing. The salary of an overseer varies from five hundred to one thousand dollars yearly; which, like a spendthrift, he dissipates before it has been long in his possession. His capital consists of a negress for his wife, and a horse for riding over the plantation, which is sometimes of considerable extent. Not being

particularly fastidious, he generally endeavors to increase his income, regardless of the means employed, consequently adopting the character of a 'smart man,' and taking advantage of the carelessness of the owner, to *Schuylerize* him. They also have a private understanding with the steward, who rarely "stands strong in honesty," and which is designated by them *mancomunarse*.

These men superintend the works, and have control over all the negros of the plantations; they are armed with a long (*machete*) sword or cutlass, and they also carry a heavy orange or other hard wood stick, which answers the purpose of a handle for the (*cuero*) whip. This is in fact a braiding of raw hide with which they flog the negros. They commonly ride on a horse or mule belonging to the owner, surveying the different places where the works are progressing. They also appoint a certain number of negros, who carry whips also, and do the business of *contramayoral*; that is, preside over a gang of workmen in the absence of the overseer, and even when he is present, punishing whenever they think it proper without consulting with their superior on the propriety or impropriety of the act.

Overseers do not commonly carry fire arms; they are allowed to take with them one or more dogs taught to pursue runaway negros, and even to attack those who are present if they are encouraged. Many wonderful things are narrated relative to the scent and courage of these animals in defending their masters against the negros. I will relate two, which I believe may be relied upon; though, speaking plainly, I have no confidence in the words of the *guajiros*.

A negro obtained by his tricks the nickname of *Escribano* (notary public). Persons of this business are in bad repute: a by-word here says, that they "enter hell head

long with the velocity of a cannon ball." He used to spend the greater part of the year hidden in the woods, and came to the plantation when he was either caught or compelled to do so by hunger. Before doing this, he usually went to some neighboring farmer to *apadrinar* him; that is, to exert his influence on the overseer to avoid punishment. This is a recourse that slaves possess, and which no white person ever denies them. He was in the habit of making use of the most crafty tricks to frustrate the perseverance of the dogs; and this, he almost always accomplished. The old overseer was removed and a new one appointed, who had an excellent dog called *Guataca*, and with which he went out in search of the runaway negro. He was induced, perhaps, to undertake the search by the circumstance of having seen some cinders in the interior of the woods, where undoubtedly he had been roasting bananas. The dog was taken to the spot, and after smelling for a short while, began to run through the bushes. After running for a long time, he stopped on the border of a brook, about twenty-four or twenty-five feet wide, the water being shallow, exhibiting great anxiety. The overseer who followed, soon reached the place, and began to set on the dog; but he barked, not daring to cross to the other side. He then saw in the middle of the brook a deep hollow, in which he imagined there might be an alligator. He suspected then that the negro had selected that place to cross the brook, hoping that this animal would catch and devour the dog when passing. He then tied *Guataca* with a string, and going farther up, on the border of the brook passed to the other side, and came down as far as he had gone up; so as to stand just opposite the place where he was before. The animal looked for, and readily found the track again; and went on. The overseer was following behind, and had lost sight

of the dog already, when he heard him growling; he then ran and found the animal biting and tearing the negro's clothes, who undoubtedly heard it coming and left his garments to occasion delay. The overseer took them from the dog and bade him to proceed; the animal searched as if unconscious, but lastly ran through the cane field. At one end of it was a kind of precipice, where he lost the track again; as when the man arrived, he saw him turning round, with his nose almost touching the ground. Suddenly he raised his head, and began to bark furiously. The negro was entirely naked on a tree. The overseer then tied the dog to prevent him biting, and told the negro to come down. He obeyed, and was taken to the house, after receiving several lashes.

The other story was as follows: On a Sunday afternoon, the overseer met with one of the best negroes of the plantation coming from a neighboring distillery with a *botija* under his arm, and asked him what it contained: the negro answered *aguardiente* (brandy), whereupon the overseer loosened the whip and administered a lash. The slave grasped it with his left hand, and, pulling vigorously, made the guajiro fall from his horse. He then left the *botija*, and rushing to the white man, took the sword from him. The latter was accompanied by two dogs, which attacked the aggressor, while his wife who was looking from the houses, loosened the chain with which Guataca was tied, and he reached the spot just when the negro was trying to dispatch the other two with the sword. The faithful dog jumped upon him with such violence, that he threw the negro on the ground, where he fainted, after receiving a heavy blow on the head.

LETTER VIII.

Villages of runaways (*Palenques*)—*Rancherias*—The hunting of runaway negros—Pepe Torres, the *ranchador*—His duel with a valiant mulatto.

I THINK you would like to read the account of a *rancheria* which I witnessed. It is a regular hunt of those negros who run away from the plantations and assemble in the interior of woods, building very imperfectly a *ranch*o (hut) which only serves to keep off the rain. Sometimes several *ranchos* are seen together according to the number of runaways; and when they secure places of difficult access, they rapidly increase and form *palenques*, or villages, where they cultivate roots and bananas for their food, which together with the animals they catch with traps, or steal from neighboring plantations, afford them sufficient nourishment. There are permanent *palenques* in the mountains of *El Cobre* and *El Cuzco*, which the government has not been able to break up, notwithstanding their having been many years in existence, and troops having been repeatedly sent to dislodge them.

Rancherias are regular *palenques*, though on a smaller scale, of from ten to twenty negros. They live on the vegetables, pigs and poultry which they steal during the night; they are almost entirely naked; their arms are the

spades or cutlasses with which they work, and they carry commonly with them *chuzos*, or long sticks of hard wood sharpened and scorched at the end, to render them still harder. They seldom make use of arrows, and more seldom yet secure the services of a gun.

I was in a sugar plantation in the "*Vuelta de Abajo*," called "La Tumba," and one evening the party of the famous *ranchador* "Pepe Torres," arrived. It comprised three men and five dogs. Their object was to make a descent on a *rancheria*, about three miles from the plantation, of from twelve to fifteen negroes, headed by a native *chino* (light-colored negro), who it was known had a sword, and had obtained the renown of *guapo* (courageous). The *ranchadores* carried swords, and a knife in its case, tied in a belt.

I did not wish to lose this opportunity of witnessing a hunting party of this description, and though I took with me my sword and gun, I made up my mind not to take any active part, but remain neutral as long as possible. My companions agreed that I should accompany them on those terms, and we started an hour before sunrise (Ave Maria). The dogs were tied in pairs with a rope, both ends of which were in the hands of the *ranchador*, and passed through the rings of their collars, so that by loosening one end only they were liberated. Pepe Torres had only one, which besides being tied, was muzzled. On entering the woods it was difficult to restrain the dogs; they had already scented the runaways, and pulled the strings vigorously.

I was behind the other *ranchadores*. Presently I observed two huts, in one of which a fire was brightly blazing: by its light I espied a naked negro with a coal in his hand in the act of lighting his pipe. His back was turned towards us.

At this moment (the morning's dawn), we heard the barking of a small dog, and four or five negros rushed suddenly from the huts, evidently alarmed. On seeing them, one of our dogs barked, and they shouted and began to run. Shortly afterwards, others issued from both huts, stumbling as if they had been sleeping, and commenced also flying in all directions. Our three men rushed to the huts, and the dogs which pulled most strenuously, increased their velocity. Pepe Torres, with sword in hand, entered the first hut; the other two the second, and I slowly approached the door where the first named was, and saw two negros on their knees, and one lying on the ground, struggling with the dog, which in spite of the muzzle, bit him very often. Pepe Torres gave one of them a rope to tie the other in such a manner as to make the elbows come close together on the back; and this done, he tied himself with the other end of the rope, the arms of that one who had done the same to the first; he then called the dog and bade him to go to a corner, kicking him at the same time; the animal growled and obeyed; the third was also tied, and he helped the three to lay on the ground face downwards. The two ranchadores, who had found nobody in the other hut, followed the others. As Pepe was hurrying out of the second hut, I saw a *chuzo* passing about three inches from my eyes, and heard soon after the dog howling, as the instrument had scratched one of his legs, and blood was trickling from the wound. Pepe Torres commenced swearing, and said that he would revenge the wound of his dog, and taking him by the collar went in the direction marked by the *chuzo* so swiftly that I could hardly follow him. The dog readily found the track, and notwithstanding his lameness, we lost sight of him. We went on, and after a short interval, heard him barking. Pepe ran, and also disappeared; but I heard the *dog's* voice and it served me as a guide.

The sun was already shining, and I had just emerged from the wood: a thick row of *cañas bravas* (reeds) was before me; I was about to pass through them, when I saw on the other side a pond, in the centre of which a mulatto was standing with the water rising to his waist, without any hat, but a handkerchief tied round the head, and a long sword in his hand. He had his back turned towards me, and on the opposite border Torres was standing, so that I remained unperceived. The runaway defied the guajiro, making a proposal that he should tie the dog, and he would then meet him in single combat. He did it quickly and the other began to emerge from the pond. The resolute ranchador was waiting at the top of the height unconcerned, so that the other had to ascend in order to attack him. This he was doing most undauntedly, notwithstanding the disadvantage, when the dog, which had been jumping and barking, and which was not (perhaps purposely) well tied, got loose and rushed towards him, when only six or eight paces from Torres. On turning round to defend himself against the dog, Pepe jumped and struck him with the sword, which entering the right shoulder almost split the body in two, as the sword would have cut the left hip if it had descended with a little more force. I was touched at the treacherous murder of the courageous mulatto, and hid myself from the sight of the murderer. I, then, went back to the huts, where I found that the number of prisoners had increased by three, which the other ranchadores, whose names I do not recollect, had captured. Torres arrived shortly afterwards, bringing, as a trophy, the sword of his victim, and overflowing with joy at his exploit. He related the story in such a manner as to make me almost doubt the evidence of my own eyes; so highly colored was the sanguinary scene. They had been fighting over

a quarter of an hour; he had been struck by the mulatto, two or three times with the back of the sword, and finally had split him in two. Neither the dog, which could claim an equal share of the triumph, nor I, who knew that all was false, denied his assertions. He, nevertheless, ought to have known, by my countenance, that I had seen everything. He recalled to my mind that inimitable creation of Shakspeare, "Swaggering *Jack Falstaff*," who with 'hack'd sword,' maintained mortal combat with his foes, "full seven hours by Shrewsbury clock."

Of the six runaways taken, only one belonged to the plantation "La Tumba:" the others were from neighboring estates, where they were taken in order to collect four dollars *captura* (seizure) for each. I was requested to take to the plantation the one belonging to it; I accepted, and intended to loosen the rope with which he was tied, but thought that he could escape. I was very much annoyed; but the evil was caused by my promise. I concluded, then, to be at least his *padrino* (protector), and obtained the relinquishment of flogging, but could not prevent his being shackled, in order to avoid a second escape.

LETTER IX.

Poverty of country people—Manner of dressing—Causes of poverty—The game of *Monte*, and cock-fighting—Idleness—Murder of Garro—Treachery and revenge—Death of Castañeda—Bad feeling against the Spanish government—Duels among *guajiros*—Quarrels—Highway robbers—No cruelty inflicted—Interesting stories of highway-men—Padron, Arencibia.

A WEALTHY *guajiro* in Cuba is a wonder, as their expenses commonly exceed their incomes. They recall to memory the words of the old song,

“How happy the soldier who lives on his pay,
“And spends *half-a-crown* out of *sixpence* a day.”

They are not, however, extravagant at their tables or in their dress. They commonly wear a shirt and pantaloons of coarse striped linen, and sometimes, though rarely, drawers of Silesian linen, a straw hat and a pair of shoes. without any stockings, vest, cravat, or coat. They also make use of a large cloak of poor cloth for rainy weather, and for the *nortes* (cold season). If a bridle, a pair of silver spurs, a sword with silver handle, a pack saddle and a bladder for their segars, are added, we shall have a faithful picture of the *magnificent* dressing of a true *guajiro*.

They indulge, however, in other expenses which swal-

low all their earnings, no matter how large they may be. Their wives and children, as well as themselves, generally smoke, and this item costs them commonly from fifty to seventy-five cents daily. The wife and children, unless they are full-grown boys, do not devote themselves to any useful purpose. They, at the utmost, sew their clothing, and take care of the poultry, so that there is only one producer and many consumers.

Gambling (either the cock fight or the *monte*), is very general among them: they have also a decided propensity to the *dolce far niente*, and great horror of all kinds of exercise. I have wondered several times at the immobility of the overseer, whom I have seen during several successive hours on the back of a mule, looking upon the negros working, without moving or doing any thing else than smoking segars, with their legs crossed over the pack saddle. If it happened that a neighbor passing by, began to talk to him, he need not fear being told that he is busy, as he will continue talking as long as possible, and this neighbor, who was going perhaps on an important errand, does not care about losing two hours in useless conversation; for, as it is said in one of their maxims, "What is not done to-day will be accomplished to-morrow."

These men are not, however, entirely devoid of activity, and, as a proof of it, I will relate the well known story of the murder of Garro, which, though it happened when Don Diego Navarro was governor, and is rather old, is nevertheless very interesting, and merits a recital.

This Señor Garro had a sugar plantation, seven or eight leagues from Havana (twenty-one or twenty-two miles). Some disagreement occurred between him and the overseer, whom he slapped in the face. He overlooked the offence; but did not forget it, and made up his mind to revenge himself. Some time elapsed, and one evening

he went to bed very early, contrary to his general custom, complaining of a severe headache to the other workmen. In order to cure it, he took a hot foot-bath, after which nobody dares in Cuba to go out of doors, there being great danger of getting *pasma* (lock jaw). At nine or half past nine in the evening, he departed through a back door of his room, and saddling the horse, went to the woods of the plantation, where he had beforehand concealed another horse borrowed from a friend on some pretext. He took the saddle from his own and put it on this horse, leaving the other in the place of the one borrowed. This done, he rode to Havana, and stationing himself in a street in ambush, he saw Garro coming in his carriage from the theatre. As soon as it passed, he approached it from behind, and plunged his sword into his shoulders, so dexterously, that the heart was severed. The murderer had covered his face with a handkerchief. The driver on hearing the screaming of the victim, turned his face, and though he did not know him, affirmed that he was a guajiro. The circumstance of the *slapping* had not been forgotten, and suspicions naturally arose against the overseer. Shortly after sunrise, the judges of the inquest were in the plantation, as Señor Navarro evinced a strong desire of discovering the murderer. They found the overseer in his bed; every body declared that he had gone there sick, having before taken a foot-bath, and had not been out of the room since. His horse was examined, and as it had only been ridden from the house to the woods, and returned from there to the house. it did not show any marks of having made a long journey. The calmness and great dissimulation with which he made his affidavit, removed so effectually every suspicion, that he was not even imprisoned. These details have come to light, because he related them himself, shortly before dying.

These base and murderous retaliations are very common; cold-blooded assassinations are not of rare occurrence, even when the victim is not known to the murderer, who is commonly influenced by money. Do not entertain the opinion that I refer to the death of Castañeda, though he was killed by a guajiro. It is a well known fact that this deed had a political object, without any other motive on the part of the perpetrator than a violent impulse of pure, disinterested patriotism. I have seen him here, and you may have done the same, as he has been twice in New York. I have conversed with him, and he has related the facts as they happened, both to me and to others. But it is remarkably strange that the government does not know who he is, notwithstanding the great number of persons who are in possession of the secret, and although many others, who belong to the Spanish party, would give a large reward for his apprehension. This strikingly evinces the sympathy entertained towards General Lopez, and the universal hatred against the infamous traitor who delivered him to the oppressors of that Cuba, for which he died an unflinching martyr.

I would not charge the guajiros with a lack of personal courage, for they have shown on several occasions proofs of real valor. Their behavior in duels among themselves, however, does not afford strong proofs of heroism. Their aim is to win, regardless of the means employed, which are not always gentlemanly. Very often, the first who arrives on the spot, conceals himself to wait for his adversary, who is shot or struck with a sword without knowing whence the blow came.

Their sudden quarrels partake also of the character of treachery. With the same hand and movement with which they slap their adversaries in the face to provoke them, they unsheathe their cutlasses; and on drawing the blade,

strike and cut their enemies with it, who very often have had no time to recover from their surprise. If their opponent is smart and light, he jumps backwards and draws his sword, avoiding at the same time the blow. The other, in most cases, does not come to close quarters, and the quarrel ends by their being separated through the exertions of the spectators.

The sad consequences arising from vice, and chiefly from that of gambling, are felt in Cuba as in other countries. Highway robbers are abundant, but I never heard of any of these desperadoes having capped the climax of their enormities by excessive cruelty or downright murder, which so frequently occur in Spain. Their object is to rob, and though it is true that they kill when any opposition is exercised, they do not, however, employ such means when the victim yields readily to their demands, nor do they invent tortures, as the party called Jitana, did, some years ago in Estremadura.

I have seen one of these robbers, and I do not mention even his initials, on account of his great notoriety. He is a wealthy proprietor, but gambling and other vices have induced him to continue the dangerous pursuits of a highwayman. He has three or four companions in iniquity, who assist him in his depredations: he has been tried by the Military Commission, and has obtained by aid of his money, a mild punishment, which, though it has deprived him of a large part of his property, has given him a stronger inclination to rob: at least his life was saved by the *disinterested clemency* of his judges. One of the charges made against him in the prosecution was founded on a large quantity of human bones having been discovered in a dry well of his plantation.

One of the most famous highwaymen, named Miguel Padron, was killed some years ago, by the police force

under the command of Captain Armona, and taken in triumph to Havana, which he entered in broad daylight, tied across a mule. Over twenty men, armed with carbines, surrounded after dark the isolated poultry house, where he was sleeping alone with two loaded *trabucos* (blunderbusses). He was not aware of his situation until shortly before sunrise, as the municipal guard feared to enter, or even approach the shed. In order to make his flight more easy in the darkness which still prevailed, he opened the door: those who were just opposite to him fled, affording him a good opportunity to escape. He then fired one of the blunderbusses at them, and throwing it on the ground, began to run at great speed with the other in his hand; but a well-directed ball, out of many shots, finished his bold career. Padron's audacity had become so great, that even within six or nine miles of Havana, he inspired terror by his desperate exploits. He confined himself to this distance from the capital, undeterred by the imminent danger to which he was constantly exposed. He had no accomplices, and it is said that he several times put to flight the patrols of the judge of the district by whom he was persecuted.

These robbers are sometimes protected by the aforesaid officers, and this is the only clue that can be found to the fact of their eluding for so many years the prosecution of the government. Farmers or planters are not commonly assaulted in their estates by these men, as they avoid having any money in their possession, and as, on the other hand, they are not allowed to keep fire-arms without paying eight dollars yearly for each to the government, we may safely say that they are at the mercy of these bandits.

The most shocking assault committed in late years, was perpetrated in the estate of one Arancibia, by a party

under the command of Emeterio Morejon, who being an old offender, rather wealthy, and a near relation of several pretty rich families of Matanzas, robbed and murdered him in the most cruel and infamous manner. This affair yielded a handsome income to the Spanish judges engaged in the prosecution, because many persons in comfortable circumstances having been impeached as accomplices of Morejon, were like him committed to prison. Every individual had to pay a large amount, in order to escape the hardships of a protracted detention in the jail, though some of them were free from all participation in the crime.

LETTER X.

· Love of the guajiros — Their wives — Superstition — Lights — Anecdotes — Irreligion — Its causes — Opinions relative to Spanish affairs not less erroneous than those of the Spaniards as to Cuban matters — Sugar makers — Their assistants — Their moral capacity and social condition.

THE bachelor guajiro falls in love while very young, but does not commonly marry until twenty-eight or thirty years of age. His Platonic amours are long cherished, even to the extent of six or eight years. With wonderful patience he witnesses the appearance and disappearance of the Queen of Night, until the *honeymoon* shall bring the fruition of his hopes. In the mean time, he bestows his complaisances, after his fashion, on the fair one he may have selected. On account of the slenderness of their means, these civilities consist of presents of small value, but their devotedness is exemplified by personal sacrifices, as for instance, travelling weary miles, passing through bad roads, enduring rains, showing great agility or courage, singing *décimas* (Spanish stanzas), which they know by heart, dancing the *zapateo*, &c. His lady-love considers these attentions as a sufficient title to her affections, and rewards his behavior by forbearing to go to balls or any other amusements, which he does not countenance.

she is therefore *consecuente* (that is, acts with *consistency*). Coquetry is exceedingly rare among them. When the marriage takes place, one of the first presents made by the bridegroom is a negress, to work for his helpmate ; but as the cares of the family increase very rapidly, they become too great for the physical ability and slowness of the slave. Hence, the unmarried young women pass, generally, from a retired and quiet life into one that is toilsome and painful. It is easy to imagine that I refer to the journeymen guajiros ; as those who are wealthy act as they do in other places, in accordance with their means and liberality.

From what I have narrated, it is but natural that you should consider these people as superstitious. They are not so, however, and as far as this is concerned, they have a great advantage over the country people in Spain, a fact which is acknowledged even by the Spaniards themselves. A phenomenon, however, frightens them dreadfully, viz ; "*jack-a lanterns*" which they think are souls of different persons, who by their misdeeds, are condemned to suffer forever. The most courageous guajiro will not dare to pass at night near a place where they appear. Sometimes, in order to frighten those who boast of being very bold, they introduce a lighted candle inside a *guiro*, or dry hollow pumpkin full of holes, and place it on a road which they know they must cross, concealing themselves in the vicinity in order to enjoy the amusement caused by the trepidation of the spirit-haunted. A planter informed me, that travelling once on horseback, preceded by a negro with a *cuaba* or large lighted torch in his hand, he met a guajiro who was approaching in an opposite direction and on seeing the light, was suddenly seized with terror, and uttering terrific cries, turned his horse round, and ran at full speed, commending himself to the Virgin and all the protecting saints.

The country people of Cuba, as well as the other inhabitants, are not very religious. Most of them learn a few prayers by heart, which they repeat without perhaps fully understanding their import. This does not prevent, however, images of the Virgin and of Saints being in every house. They do not generally confess very often. Many fail to do it, even once in the year, as the Catholic Church requires; and many delay it until they are sick and on the approach of death. In regard to mass, some ~~attend~~ ^{attend} to it punctually, but those who live in the open country very seldom go to church, even on the days ordered by the rules established by their creed.

The information I have been able to gather, shows that more attention was formerly paid to religion than now; the "Constitutional system," which ruled from the year 1820 until '23, it is said, caused a revolution in religious ideas. The rural population listened with interest to "Voltaire's Works," "Volney's Ruins," "The Citer," and other irreligious works, which produced great evils, converting into atheists, or at least into deists, numbers of heedless and ignorant guajiros, who on renouncing all religion, imagined they would obtain unlimited freedom to give vent to their passions and vices.

Though they are descendants from Spaniards, and live under their laws, the habits of the Cuban guajiros are quite different. Their attachment to the mother country is very slight, and they entertain mistaken ideas even of the most common and noteworthy peculiarities of the Peninsula. They believe, for instance, that the Catalans, Gallicians and Biscayens, belong to another nation, and consider as Spaniards those only who like them speak Castilian. The ignorance of the inhabitants of Spain, in regard to Cuban matters (even to its geographical and *topographical* situation), is not less striking. Many exceed-

ingly ludicrous errors of the government at Madrid are cited; and I will refer, for your edification, to a few royal commands :

1st. Ordering the establishment of a squadron of *mounted horsemen*, in the *sound of Campeche*, to prevent an invasion of the island.

2d. Ordering a company of troops coming from Spain, to disembark in the *port* of Guanabacoa (which is an inland town), to avoid the attacks of the yellow fever.

3d. Ordering the establishment of a guard in *Factoria* (large building for the manufacture of segars) to prevent the attacks of the *comejen* (an insect which crumbles the wood to powder). Such a display of *royal* ignorance is almost incredible; I know you will not readily give credence to these absurdities, but so many respectable persons have related them to me, and vouched for their authenticity, that it precludes the possibility of falsehood. I see and experience every day other instances of this ignorance, though on a smaller scale.

The guajiros who intend to confine themselves to the manufacture of sugar, learn the mere routine only, and practice what they have seen their masters perform, without studying the theory of the proceedings. Being devoid of any knowledge of reading and writing, and without the slightest notion of physics or chemistry, these men begin by engaging themselves as *segundos* (assistants to the master) with a small salary; and, after being two or three years in the business, they readily find situations as masters, without any other proof of their ability or competency, than the circumstance of having served their apprenticeship. They do not sometimes, however, practice any operation, or even order it to be practised, but commonly devote themselves to the care of the negroes during the absence, or repose of their superiors.

Though many planters visit their estates when the grinding commences, yet, few are able to judge of the quality of the fruit manufactured, before it is *purged*: and, as a month commonly elapses before this and the operations which precede it, are gone through, it happens that one-sixth of the whole crop is made before they can ascertain whether the master *ha acertado* (has hit), or *se ha perdido* (has missed.) The only remedy that can be applied, then, is *botar* (to discharge) the master. The value of the sugar lost is not refunded to the owner, as there are always some motives to allege (as is the case with the unskilful physician, who kills his patient), and besides no remuneration can be expected from the insolvent

I am afraid of prolixity in my description of the Cuban guajiros. It is necessary, however, that I should speak to you of the *carreteros* and *arrieros*, as my picture would be very incomplete without them. But as I must say something respecting roads, and the carts most commonly used, I will delay these matters for the next letter.

LETTER XI.

Effects of Railroads — Common roads — Travelling *volantes* and *gal-
trines* — Carts — Carmen (*carreteros*) — Their lives and hard-
ships — Muleteers (*arrieros*) — Physical strength—Effects of
climate.

THE number of persons devoted to the business of carmen and muleteers was quite considerable until some years ago. Since the establishment of railroads it has decreased considerably, so that the first effect of these useful improvements was the ruin of many families.

I believe that there are not over six artificial roads of any extent in all the island; and most of them commence in the city of Havana, the longest not extending over forty miles. They were constructed after the introduction of railroads, and tolls are collected on them at certain distances. These roads, however, form an exception to the general rule, which is: "There are no other roads in Cuba, than those formed by the natural ground." In drought, no other inconvenience is experienced than that arising from the inequalities of the ground, which, on account of having never been levelled, form too steep slopes. The soil is commonly hard enough to support, without much wear, the weight of the cars; but as soon as the rainy season sets in, the violence with which

the water falls, the uninterrupted succession of showers, the deep ruts made by the wheels, as well as the want of good drainage, convert the roads into large pools, whose bottoms abound with deep holes, which cannot be seen or avoided, on account of the stagnant water with which they are covered. Travelling in *quitrin* or *volante* is then difficult, and in many places entirely impossible; even to ride on horseback a few leagues, without falling several times, is considered a wonder.

. All these difficulties are increased by one of greater consequence, the want of bridges. Nearly all the rivers have to be waded; and when they are subject to freshets, or when rains have been abundant, they swell so much that they assume the impetuosity of torrents. It is then necessary, either to cross them by swimming, or to wait on their margins some hours. The bridges of Mordazo (recently built), Marianao, Calabazar, &c., are costly works, but executed without taste or the knowledge of the new discoveries which have been made, and applied to the science.

When the roads are bad, travelling *quitrines* are drawn by three horses or mules abreast. It sometimes, however, happens, that the wheels fall into such deep ruts, as to be covered up to the height of the naves, and then the utmost strength of the animals is not sufficient to extricate the carriage. Help is then solicited, and gladly and cheerfully tendered by the neighboring farmers, who, without requiring, or even accepting any compensation for their valuable services, bring promptly a team of oxen to assist the horses.

The scarcity of good roads is perhaps owing to the clumsy construction of the carts (*carretas*). They are huge wooden frames, which, when empty, three men could scarcely move. The great strength given to them

may possibly be necessary, to withstand the shocks and concussions to which they are continually liable. Their own weight, however, prevents their easy motion, forms deep ruts into which the wheels fall, and constitutes one of the most powerful causes of the destruction of roads. I am inclined to think that these cumbersome carts cannot be under one ton, and as the regular load carried by them is eight boxes of sugar, or about four thousand pounds, they require on a dry and level road three teams of oxen. But when they fall into the pools formed on them during the rainy season, six and sometimes eight teams are not sufficient.

The life of carmen is one of great hardship. They are generally exposed to the weather, and their salaries are very small. Covered up to the knees with mud, during the rains, and suffering the rigors of a tropical sun, they have less relaxation than the oxen they drive. They suspend a hammock beneath their carts, and there they lie, ten inches above the water, their faces covered with the hat, as a protection against mosquitos, and without taking off their clothes during several days, nor drinking any other warm beverage than pure coffee. Roads are sometimes impassable, and carmen have to stop two or three days at some tavern; and it is not uncommon to spend three weeks in a round journey of sixty miles.

From the necessity of mutual help at every moment, no long distances are ever undertaken with a single cart. Three or four commonly belonging to the same owner, are made to go together, and when any one of them falls into a deep rut, the teams of the others are employed for its extrication. It is painful to witness this performance; the shouts, blasphemies, and despair of the carmen; their great and very often, unsuccessful efforts; and the sufferings of the poor animals, which are often cruelly treated

are scenes which make us turn the eye from such revolting barbarity.

Muleteers (*arrieros*), are, perhaps, less unhappy than carmen, but the difference cannot be great. Their salaries are also scanty, and though they are not so often exposed to the weather, sleep more frequently in their own beds, and eat warm meals; they are, however, subject to hardships unknown to the other class. When a mule for instance falls into a hole, they have to employ all their strength for its withdrawal. They are also sometimes kicked and bitten by these animals, and they have, in order to load them, to lift from thirty to sixty bags, weighing one hundred and eight pounds each, to the height of their loins, unaided and without stopping, and tie them tightly afterwards, &c., &c.

It is quite natural to think, after the description I have given of the guajiros, that they must be stout and strongly built in order to stand a life so full of hardships; and they are really so. Many proofs of extraordinary exertions have been afforded by them, and I have seen some who may be well classed among the Samsons of other countries. Athletic frames are not very rare, and I, therefore, infer that the doctrine of hot climates producing a lack of energy and vigor, is far from truth. It is true that tall statures are not so commonly met with here, as in the United States, and that sanguineous constitutions are not so abundant as bilious and lymphatic. Experience, however, teaches us that these outward appearances are not always accompanied with vigor and strength. Among our countrymen, on the other hand, feeble and weak persons are not uncommon, though this is very often the effect of habits that are any thing but temperate. Observing foreigners have remarked that the *old age of North Americans is precocious!*

LETTER XII.

Spanish Population — Drawbacks to Emigration — How Spanish Emigrants build their fortunes — Sketches of Count Lombillo and others — Revengeful act on Don Joaquin Gomez — Why Spaniards do not return to their country — Anecdote of a native of Lima — Innkeepers in the country — Advantages of Spaniards over natives — Lawyers — Physicians.

The number of Spaniards or *Peninsulares* (as they are called here), living on the Island, is estimated at from fifty to seventy thousand, without including the army or navy, of which I will speak hereafter.

The fear of the yellow-fever, the expense of transportation, and the uncertainty of readily finding situations, restrain the yearly emigration from being large, notwithstanding the probabilities of making large fortunes. Emigrants are commonly invited by their relatives, who are already established in Cuba; the appearance and manners of many, soon after landing, are such as would give an exceedingly poor idea of the civilization of the mother country; they are then called by the negros *blancos sucios* (dirty whites). The inferiority of the poor classes of Spain, and more especially of Galicia, when compared with those of Cuba, is a fact indirectly acknowledged by the Spaniards themselves. The following request is very

often made:—"Sir: Please take my cousin for doorman ; he is *green* yet, as he has been but a short time here; but he will soon be useful to you." They are also accustomed to own their incapability, so that they readily consent to enter into engagements to work several months, and even for a year, without receiving more compensation than their board. Thus you see that even Havana is not without "green" people. Though cart loads of Irishmen, Germans or Dutchmen, are not seen here, by the side of others of sheep or calves, the appearance of emigrants is very much like those of New York. They wonder at every thing they see, and they are frightful images of nakedness, uncleanness and hunger. These people, however, shortly after landing, consider themselves as masters of the country.

Spaniards coming to the Island, whether officers of the government or not, keep steadily in view the prospect of making a fortune. It is said here that they leave in the "old country" all party ideas or political opinions, and unite themselves in Cuba to acquire riches. They also forsake that idleness, which is one of the characteristics of their nation, and become here very industrious, and economical.

Those not employed by the government, devote themselves to the pursuit of trade, but having no capital, they, in order to obtain it, engage as salesmen in the stores. During many years, they conduct themselves as faithful servants of the owner; they avoid all kinds of expense, though they may stand in need of the most indispensable requisite. When they have amassed some capital, they are allowed to have a share in the shop, and undertake several speculations, the slave trade being the most commonly resorted to, by which enormous profits are obtained; after a short time, or simultaneously, they become *refaccionis-*

tas (those who make advances of goods on the crops of plantations), in which business, without capital, they charge interest, which swells to large amounts, so that in a few years they find themselves owners of the estates which they have been supplying; they endeavour, meanwhile to marry a rich lady, and finally purchase a title, or a cross of distinction.

I will refer to a few persons, each of whom represents a large class, in order that it might not be thought that I have taken the exception for the general rule, as is usually done. I do not fear, therefore, to be contradicted, at least with justice, as the facts are notorious. I have been very particular in obtaining every kind of information from the best sources, and no other is transmitted to you than what deserves full credit.

Count Lombillo was accustomed to say publicly, that he passed a long illness lying on a heap of pieces of sheeting; that he did not wish to indulge in the luxury of a bed, until he had accumulated twenty thousand dollars capital; and that his wife had, when he married her, one hundred thousand dollars. The liquidation of his business showed that the slave trade had yielded him nine hundred thousand dollars nett.

Santiago de la Cuesta Manzanal made a much more rapid fortune, though he is charged with not having been very upright; he was not satisfied with the title of Conde de la Reunion, and purchased a great cross, in order to have the compellation of *Escelencia*. He married the daughter of a man, who died very rich, and who was at the commencement of his life a pedler, or retailer of needles and other trifles. Cuesta, in spite of numerous law-suits, by which deposits, amounting to a large sum, were being claimed from him, died in the midst of plenty, and also, it is said, in agonizing remorse.

Don Joaquin Gomez has not wished for titles, being satisfied with the distinction of *Escelencia*. He arrived at Havana, when about the age of thirteen or fourteen years, almost naked. A merchant named Nis, who was very successful, sheltered him under his roof, and gave him assistance. He soon embarked in the slave traffic; enjoys a high repute for honesty, and it is affirmed that, out of the two millions capital he possesses, over one has been acquired in that trade. Some years ago he became blind, and has been suffering great pains on account of a bottle of sulphuric acid having been poured on his head by a man named Verdaguer, while he was praying at Church. The cause of the deed was as follows: Verdaguer sent twelve thousand dollars, which constituted his whole capital to Buenos Ayres, and ordered them to be invested in jerked beef, giving some shares in the speculation to several Catalonians, who denied afterwards his having any interest or claim on the cargo. A law-suit was at once instituted, and they requested Gomez to exercise his influence on the judges in their favor; this he did, without inquiring, it is said, who was right, and obtained a favorable decision for his countrymen. When Verdaguer ascertained the manner in which he lost this suit, involving his whole fortune, he burst into an ungovernable rage, and harbored a resentment, which increased with age, and ended at last in leading him to the perpetration of that deed, which was aggravated by his committing suicide with a few drops of prussic acid, causing instant death.

The present Marquis Esteva commenced his career in the capacity of a doorkeeper, which is considered in Havana as the most humble occupation. He succeeded in marrying the daughter of a wealthy Portuguese, notwithstanding the efforts made by her father for its prevention.

He was not satisfied with a title and a great cross, but aspired also to an office in the army, and obtained the commission of colonel, which a son-in-law purchased for him at Madrid. These instances are, I believe, sufficient to sustain my assertion. Probably you will argue, How can it be, that these men, after having gratified their ambition, fail to return to Spain on the acquisition of abundant wealth? I will presently offer an explanation. Some have undertaken the voyage, but re-embarked shortly afterwards, to rid themselves of the pressing importunities of a host of poor relations. For Spaniards indulge in "golden dreams" of the inexhaustible riches of "The Indies," and are not satisfied with a liberal present from those who have returned from their imagined "El Dorado," but think they are entitled to nearly an equal share, regarding the riches of their transatlantic possessions as the "common stock" of their nation. You will, perhaps, consider this an exaggeration, but I believe it is true; and, as a proof, I shall recite the story of a native of Lima, Peru, who landed at Cadiz in 1814.

On disembarking, he was accosted by the army of beggars which swarms all over Spain. So great was the number of wretched objects, that for a while the stranger entertained the opinion that the whole nation was composed of mendicants. The ordinary amount of alms in the Peninsula is one *ochavo*, which is a copper coin of the value of two *maravedis*, so that one dollar will give relief to a battalion of three hundred and forty beggars. If we take into consideration the great number of solicitors, the amount given to each, no matter how numerous the contributors, should necessarily be very small. The joy and amazement of the beggars was greatly excited on observing that the hero, who had never seen copper coins, began to distribute sixpence to each. The news spread rapidly

throughout the ward, and from all places and even the most distant corners, flocks of ragged beggars rushed in all directions towards the traveller, who formed a common centre, shouting: "To the Indiano . . ! To the Indiano!" (a name applied by them to all persons coming from the New World). Their appearance was similar to that presented by flocks of chickens when running to a person about to scatter grain for their use. The sixpences being exhausted, the South American commenced distributing shillings, and these also being finished, he gave a quarter to one of the beggars. Their admiration and joy rose to the highest pitch, and the one who received the twenty-five cent piece acknowledged his delight and thankfulness in the most expressive language and attitudes. On seeing this, another mendicant asked him with the most ridiculous seriousness: "Why do you thank him in such a manner? Whatever he may have given to you does it not belong to our Indies?" It is useless to say that the traveller was not encouraged in the farther distribution of coins to such a haughty, yet poverty-stricken multitude.

One of the causes why Spaniards do not return to their country, after being some time in Cuba, was explained to me by a Castilian: "If I go back to my native town," said he, "they would call me *tio* (uncle) *Manuel*, but here I am addressed as *Señor Don Manuel*." If any thing in the world tends to enhance the self-importance and self-conceit which is cherished by the natives of Old Spain it is that of a high-sounding title.

Spaniards, who after their arrival in Havana go into the country, commonly engage themselves as clerks in the shops that are met with on the roads at certain distances, and which are called *tabernas* (taverns). They prefer the work of the counter to all others, and I have not seen during the time I have been in the Island, a single

Spaniard cultivating the soil. This is rather strange, when the dignified character of the Spanish people is taken into consideration; because the business of innkeeper requires great patience and forbearance, as they have to suffer the most degrading humiliations, even from the negroes. Unbelieving Creoles explain this phenomenon by saying that their arrogance is fictitious. One of them said to me: "Spaniards are haughty towards the humble, and humble towards the haughty; courageous with the cowards, and cowards with the courageous." I am convinced that there is much truth in this portraiture of the Spanish character; but I also know that the grandees of the Peninsula will pronounce it a libel, and at the same time call me *mentiroso* (a liar).

The large profits realized by the country shop-keepers, induce them to lead the isolated life of persons engaged in that trade. In order to avoid being robbed and stripped by highwaymen, they stipulate to pay them a certain sum per week or month (*igualala*); and commonly act as their spies, or at least, as their harborers. They have also, an understanding with the judges and governors of the rural districts, to avoid the penalties which they would incur by their frequent violation of the Police regulations. As these innkeepers obtain, for a very low price, the goods which the negroes steal from the plantations, they become wealthy in a few years, and boast afterwards of having made their fortunes in an *honorable* and *honest* business. A son of my *recomendado*, whom I call *Filibuster*, assured me, some days ago, that all persons purchasing goods, either by weight or by running measure, are sure to be robbed, or at least cheated, in the manner of balancing the account. I observed that this must be an exaggerated statement, and he then requested me to put its truth to the test. Accordingly, I bought a

small keg of lard; and was soon satisfied of the veracity of his assertions. I discovered mistakes (to my disadvantage of course) first in the weight, next in the amount of tare to be deducted, and lastly in the arithmetical calculations.

Spaniards in Cuba possess many advantages over the Creoles for becoming wealthy. The government affords them a decided protection, though it feigns a great impartiality. Besides the offices, which are wholly monopolized by them, many highly profitable contracts with the exchequer, and "*fat jobs*" in general, are awarded to them on the most advantageous terms.

It is, however, worth noticing, that but few Spaniards employ their countrymen for lawyers or physicians, and that they prefer Creoles. Persons emigrating from Spain, if they are of the legal profession, solicit judicial offices, and if they are physicians request the judges to appoint them to commissions, to enable them to gain a respectable position. So great is the public mistrust about the capacity of these adventures.

LETTER XIII.

Army — Character of the Spanish troops — Digressions on Spanish historians — Famous exploits of the children of Pelayo in Somosierra — Their bravery against an unarmed General — The Spanish navy — The *heroic* steamer Pizarro — How Spain treats its soldiers and mariners.

THE mysterious secrecy observed by the Spanish government, renders it impossible to ascertain the exact amount of efficient troops that now garrison the Island. They make it swell to thirty thousand men, but we know by experience that their statistics are not to be relied upon. According to the statement of a certain officer, a large amount—one half or two thirds, perhaps—must be deducted from that number, in order to attain any thing like certainty. The battalions, and even companies mentioned by the government, undoubtedly exist, but the number of their men is perhaps only one half of that which is stated.

It cannot be denied that the soldiers are well dressed ; that they manœuvre tolerably well in a sham-fight ; and that if they were equally imposing in the face of an enemy, the poor opinion which Napoleon entertained of the Spanish troops, would no longer be held. This is, however, the opinion of all judges, not Spaniards, who have

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tried them. They say, however, that foreigners speak disparagingly of them from *envy* or *jealousy*. You may remember that the correspondent here of a New York paper said some days ago: "Had the Spaniards gone to the Crimea in place of the Allies, the siege of Sebastopol would have lasted a few minutes only, and the dispatch of their General in chief would have contained the three famous words of Cæsar: "*Veni, vidi, vici.*"

As I have spoken already in favor of my heroes, it is fair that I should refer to one of their glorious feats, to prove the correctness of my assertions. Though I quote it from an English author, who was fighting for Spain, his statements cannot be contradicted, as nobody can accuse the celebrated Napier of having written falsehoods. On the contrary, he has had the *boldness* to narrate facts as they really happened, and did not, therefore, follow the rules observed by Spanish historians. As far as I know, these rules have never been published, and consequently it is not strange that an Englishman did not know them. This is less remarkable still when we consider that only after many exertions on my part, have I been able to discover them. These rules may be comprised in one, and that is very simple, viz: "Not to relate any fact or event, no matter how truthful and important, if it contributes to depreciate, in any way, the character of high, unrivalled, and matchless Castille." In compliance with this principle, Solis says in his "History of the settlement and conquest of North America," that "he overlooks some facts attributed to Hernan Cortes, because they do not contribute to exalt his character." The Historian Mariano Torrente, who, wishing to flatter his countrymen, wrote three large volumes of the most barefaced falsehoods that could be invented, on the wars of the Spaniards against their American descendants, was

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obliged to publish many pages vindicating himself from the charge made against him, by the press of Madrid, of being *insurrectionary*, because two or three truths elevating the character of the revolutionists, escaped through the net of his frauds. What will they think about Mr. Napier? Here is the quotation :

[From Napier's History of the Peninsular War, volume 1. page 216.]

“ The 30th, the French advanced guard reached the foot of the Somosierra, where General St. Juan, whose force now amounted to ten or twelve thousand men, was judiciously posted. Sixteen pieces of artillery, were planted in the neck of the pass * * * At daybreak, three French battalions attacked St. Juan's right, three more assailed his left, and as many marched along the causeway in the centre, supported by six guns. The French wings, spreading over the mountain side, commenced a warm skirmishing fire, which was as warmly returned, while the frowning battery at the top of the causeway was held in readiness to crush the central column, when it should come within range. At that moment Napoleon rode into the mouth of the pass, and attentively examined the scene before him ; the infantry were making no progress, and a thick fog mixed with smoke hung upon the ascent ; suddenly, as if by inspiration, he ordered the Polish cavalry of his guard to charge up the causeway, and seize the Spanish battery. In an instant the foremost ranks of the first squadron were levelled with the earth by the fire of the great battery, and the remainder were thrown into confusion ; but General Krazinski as suddenly rallied them, and covered by the smoke and the morning vapour led them sword in hand up to the mountain. As these gallant horsemen passed, the Spanish infantry on each side fired and fled towards the summit

of the causeway, and when the Poles, cutting down the gunners, took the battery, the whole army was in flight, abandoning arms, ammunitions, and baggage.

“ This surprising exploit, in the glory it conferred upon one party, and the disgrace it heaped upon the other, can hardly be paralleled in the annals of war. It is indeed almost incredible, *even to those who are acquainted with Spanish armies*, that a position, in itself nearly impregnable, and defended by twelve thousand men, should, without any panic, but merely from a deliberate sense of danger, be abandoned, at the wild charge of a few squadrons, which two companies of good infantry would have effectually stopped: yet some of the Spanish regiments so shamefully beaten here, had been victorious at Baylen a few months before ! * * * The charge * * * was the result of *Napoleon's sagacious estimate of the real value of Spanish troops* * * * The two Generals, St. Juan and Heredia, united some of the fugitives from Somosierra, on the Madrid side of the mountains, and were about to enter that capital, when *the appearance of a French patrol* terrified the vile cowards that followed them ; the multitude once more fled to Talavera de la Reyna, and *there consummated their intolerable villany by murdering their unfortunate General*, and fixing his mangled body to a tree, after which, dispersing, they carried *dishonour and fear* into their respective provinces.”

I would gladly communicate to you what I impartially think about the Spanish navy. But I am sure that all good Castilians will then conspire against my letters, and will vow and swear on a thousand crosses, that all I say is sheer falsehood, if I do not write a splendid description of its capability. It would be better, therefore, that I should mention what they think themselves about the matter.

Their navy, they say, was formerly very formidable. A proof of it is that they had a fleet called "*The Invincible*." We, who did not live in those times, have certainly witnessed defeats only ; but the engagements they have lost, notwithstanding their being in the proportion of four Spaniards to one enemy, have been effected by *treason*. Foreigners slander them, when they say that their weakness has become so great that Spanish men-of-war do not dare to attack those of equal size and force, but only vessels of a smaller armament. No good Castilian, however, must believe it, and if he knows that it is true, he must, nevertheless, affirm that it is a slander uttered by *envious* persons, who endeavor to destroy the high, honorable, and chivalrous character of Spain. When the port of Havana was blockaded by a Mexican brig, under the command of the gallant Captain Porter, two or three Spanish frigates were anchored in the harbor. These "*Invincibles*," however, failed to punish such an insolent presumption, thinking that the greatest mark of valor was discretion. A native of the City, astonished at this manifestation of cowardice, remarked to a Castilian, that it did not exalt his opinion of the Spanish marine. "Oh !" replied the latter, "it was not fear, nor any thing of the kind, but arose from true magnanimity ; there was no Spanish vessel here of the same size, and it would not have been gentlemanly to attack a foe with a force so much superior." It escaped the memory of this apologist for the valor of the Spanish naval Captains, that the heavy frigate "*Lealtad*," was dispatched a few days afterwards, for the capture of this imprudent Mexican brig, which had overhauled, and was "within an ace" of making prize of two Spanish vessels of war. They, luckily for themselves, escaped, by taking refuge in the port of Banes, about six leagues from Havana, where the brig peppered them

rather too warmly for their comfort. The two war vessels returned after their shameful flight; but as their *manœuvring* had not a tendency to confer glory on the *heroes of Castile*, silence in this instance was a *politic* observance.

In the first of the series of letters written in Cuba by Rev. Dr. Abbott, you may see the following narrative, but the fact happened many years ago, and you must *piously* believe that it is false :—

“If we had been about two ~~hours~~ later, we might have crossed the shot of a Mexican privateer and a Spanish vessel, which had a *rencontre* at the mouth of the harbor (Matanzas). The Spanish Captain, after seven shots, abandoned his vessel in his boat with five men, and fled to the shore.”

Poor Spain has no first-rate men of war since the “Soberano” died of old age. No matter ! The great Navy-yards of the Peninsula, not exceeding three, launch at least a brig every two years ; they will very soon, however, supply the deficiency, and set afloat a formidable fleet, one, not perhaps so magnificent as the famous “*Armada*” destined for the conquest of England, but on a scale so formidable as to cause many a nation to tremble !

It is a well known fact, that nearly all the Spanish navy is in the harbor of Havana the greater part of the year, but more especially, since the movements of the Filibusters in the United States have caused apprehensions of invasion. Fame has already proclaimed throughout the world, the unrivalled exploits of the old steamer Pizarro, which, according to the newspaper *Diario de la Marina*, was dreaded by the United States. This fear, perhaps arose from the many victorious engagements of this *fire-eater* ; but I am so little acquainted with modern *history*, that I think that she never even exchanged shots

with any vessel. I have only heard two of her feats viz : having chased without success the small steamer Creole, which conveyed the gallant Narciso Lopez to Cardenas ; and also having sunk in the harbor of Bahia-Honda, owing to the extreme *skill* of her *efficient* commander. Thus ended the career of this redoubtable vessel ! But to preserve her noble actions from sinking into oblivion, another steamer was christened after her, to inspire a continuance of the awe created by the warlike Pizarro. There certainly was ~~some~~ wisdom in *stereotyping* this fearful name ! It prevented the enemies of Spain, from rejoicing at the disappearance of that *nonpareil* !

I shall omit noticing the gallant bearing of the fleet of Havana. The firing into the "El Dorado," and other American vessels, compels me humbly to recognize our inferiority. It is owing to Mr. Pierce and his cabinet, that there is not a single Catalonian in Havana, who does not rest under the consolatory idea, that their fleet is an overmatch for the whole naval force of America.

Soldiers in the army or navy, have to submit, not only to heavy blows, which are administered from time to time, from the moment they commence drilling, but also to certain *calamities*, designated by the enemies of the Government as *robbery* committed by the officers, but which are only considered by the sergeants, captains, colonels, superintendents and comptrollers as arithmetical errors, *accidentally* committed against the soldiers. What is still worse, is that, after serving the time of their enlistment, the officers always find some cause to retain them in the service, and they are sometimes not allowed to retire until three or four years have elapsed after the expiration of their contracts.

The pay of the soldiers of the Cuban army, is four times as much as that received in the Peninsula ; it is,

LETTERS FROM CUBA.

never, less than half of what the most wretched negro
rns, though the work they have to perform is as hard
that of the slaves. Nevertheless, you should not
fer, that they are not contented; all the newspapers
of Havana would contradict you. It is also necessary to
be unacquainted with the patriotism of the Spaniards, in
order to affirm—as many have done—that if the money
sent to the United States to get up expeditions had been
employed here in corrupting the troops, the success of
the revolutionary movement would have been highly
probable.

Mariners, whose terms of service have expired, enjoy
a right of which other inhabitants are deprived. They
are the only persons who can fish at sea. Neptune, it
seems, remonstrates against the innovations of those, who
have not perilled their lives amid the dangers of his
domain. Only those who are mariners, in every sense,
he deems entitled to the “finny trasures.” Those who
advocate the liberty of the ocean encroach on the “divine
rights” of the Queen of Spain.

LETTER XIV.

Chinamen — Their first and second introduction — Indians from Yucatan — Natives of the Canary Islands — Montes de Oca — Calisto Gonzalez — Olafeta.

IN order to conclude the chapter on the population of Cuba, it is necessary that I should speak of the Chinamen, and the Indians from Yucatan (*Yucatecos*); but more particularly about the *isleños*, natives of the Canary Islands.

The first importation of Chinamen, took place about eight years ago (in 1847); they did not give satisfaction, generally, and their introduction was temporarily suspended. It has recently revived, and on some plantations they are highly valued. They refuse to work among the negroes, and as they are quite as strong as the blacks, and as their wages are only four dollars per month, besides their maintenance which amount to very little, it would not be strange to see them, at some future time, occupying the place of the negroes in all agricultural districts.

After the first trial of Chinamen, Mestees, or Indians from Yucatan, were imported, and many consider them better on account of their mild disposition. The cholera, however, has attacked them several times, and their number has been very materially diminished. I have

been told that a Yucatan planter, conceived the praiseworthy project of furnishing well-remunerated labor to the destitute portion of his countrymen, giving at the same time a wholesome impulse to the agriculture of this island. Relying on the excellence of his ideas, and expecting that the Captain General would receive his offer favorably, he had an interview with him, and was completely amazed on being asked by that officer "What amount he offered to pay for each Indian introduced?" Our philanthropist was not aware, perhaps, that those functionaries derive a large profit from each negro smuggled in from Africa, and that it was but natural, to expect that they did not wish to lose this premium, which constitutes one of the most considerable portions of their income.

But the most useful and important settlers in Cuba are the natives of the Canary Islands, not only because they commonly bring with them some money, but they also cultivate the soil, and endure the heat and the rains as effectually as the negroes. They have, therefore, this advantage over the Spaniards, who only like to transact business requiring very little labor, and they also find sympathizing friends among the Creoles. They perform like these, the occupations of mayorales, cowherds, &c., are industrious and hard laborers. Some return to their own country after having amassed a pretty handsome fortune, instead of remaining in Cuba as is the case with Spaniards.

They are suspected of being politically attached to the Creoles, and fresh in the memory of everybody is the history of Montes de Oca, a native of the Canary Islands, who was taken to the scaffold and executed, without sufficient legal proof, through the exertions of Señor Olañeta. In the same manner Don Ramon Pintó met his fate, through the hatred and fears of Concha. Montes

de Oca was denounced by a lawyer named Calisto Gonzalez, who endeavoured, afterwards, to obtain an office, or decoration, for his dishonorable procedure. I have several times seen this wretch, who certainly has the sinister countenance of a mercenary spy and informer. It is said, that since the death of Castañeda, he has been very uneasy, fearing a similar punishment; but it is likely that his mind is now somewhat relieved from its horrors. I should not be surprised, however, to hear of another pistol shot producing an effect similar to that which silenced the betrayer of Lopez. It is true that the famous denouncer of the conspiracy of the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three, headed by Lemus, and designated *Solés de Bolívar*, Don Juan Agustin Ferrety, is still living, although upwards of thirty years have elapsed, to enjoy his guilt-acquired title of Intendente de Provincia, and also, I believe, that of Secretary to the Queen. I do not conceal his name, because we all should endeavour to transmit it to the remotest posterity, that it may be held in abhorrence by the good and virtuous of succeeding generations.

As I have already mentioned Olañeta, I shall make a rapid sketch of his life, as he will occupy a prominent position in the history of Cuba. The Creoles say, that he is their worst enemy, and that this is the reason why he has recently been appointed by the government as a member of the new board *Consejo de Ultramar*. When judgement is to be pronounced on men belonging to a party, great caution is necessary to avoid being the unwary instrument of calumny. I will only refer to what seems to be generally taken for granted.

He was born in Asturias, Spain, from whence he proceeded to Mexico. While there, he was, notwithstanding his origin, an advocate of the republican form of govern-

ment ; but having suddenly changed his political opinions, he left that country, and arrived in Havana, about twenty years ago, poor, and without resources. Not having attended any course of studies in the University, he represented, that all his papers had been accidentally lost, and wished to be examined, in order to obtain the degree of Bachelor in Law. After its attainment, he stated that he had been already a lawyer, and also as such obtained his diploma. Before his becoming a lawyer, he had taken charge of several suits, using the services of other legal firms, a proceeding strictly forbidden by the Spanish laws. Shortly afterwards, he increased the number of his clients very rapidly, under the patronage of General Tacon, who appointed him his Attorney in the *juicio de residencia* (sham trial, in which the Captain Generals profess to give an account of the motives of their proceedings), and rewarded his services by obtaining for him the office of *fiscal* (first Attorney General) of the royal court of judicature (Real Audiencia Pretorial); to do which the government had to violate the by-laws which it had formed to rule that Court, and which ordered that no person having less than ten years of practice in the law, should be appointed a member of the aforesaid Royal Court. About twelve years afterwards, he was promoted to the presidency of that tribunal as *Rejente*; and was finally removed by Señor Concha, on account, it is said, of an old antipathy. Whether it was the effect of animosity against the republicans of Mexico, or other causes, unknown to me, the fact is, that Señor Olañeta has been one of the leaders of that pure Spanish party in Cuba, which is strenuously opposed to the ideas of the Creoles, both annexionists, or mere independents; and though it cannot be denied that he has greatly contributed to exasperate the Cubans, and increase the animosity existing

between them and the Peninsulars, it is also true, that his party are indebted to him for great services, and uninterrupted exertions. It is on account of these unremitting labors, that they exalt his character to the clouds, and represent him as a man of uncommon endowments.

I will neither endeavour to exculpate him from the heavy charges the Creoles bring against his political conduct, nor to support ~~their~~ accusations; for I am not sure that there is good ground for either the one or the other. Many Cubans ~~say~~ that he is, by nature, a perverse and envious man, ungrateful for the distinction which has been bestowed on him; that he hates them without any other cause than that which arises from the wicked pleasure of hating; and they charge him with many other faults, which, every one who fears, as I do, to be inconsiderate in publishing matters relative to personal honor, will find it the wisest course not to indicate by the slightest possible allusion.

LETTER XV.

The recomendado's family — Just censure of the inaccuracies of travellers — Measures taken by the author to avoid mistakes — Good opportunities offered to him to make important rectifications — Sources of his information — Anti-annexionists, and concessionists — An anti-Spaniard — An adherent to the Cuban *statu quo* — A rabid filibuster and abolitionist — The *aplatano* Spaniard — A programme of subsequent letters.

AFTER several months' residence in the western part of Cuba, and after travelling through a few of the districts of the tract comprehended between Matanzas and San Diego Springs, I returned to Havana, highly delighted with the pleasing remembrances of this natural and luxuriant garden, and still more so, with the amiable and generous hospitality of the Creoles. I will, therefore, relate to you my adventures and impressions, being confident that you will envy me the happy hours I have enjoyed in this charming country. Others, not less sweet, have succeeded to these: I owe them to the kindness and cordiality of my recomendado, and his respectable and virtuous family, as well as to his select visitors. From their instructive intercourse, I have gathered the interesting and valuable facts, and many of the remarks contained in my letters. I must, however, observe to you,

that all these facts and remarks have been corrected and revised by me so scrupulously, that I can venture to make myself as accountable for every thing I advance, as if I had been an eye-witness. I have endeavoured by the most careful attention, to escape the charge of inaccuracy, or exaggeration, which is very often, and with much justice, made against travellers, on account of their inconsiderate haste in forming their judgement.

My opportunities and facilities for correcting these inaccuracies have been very favorable. The diversity, and sometimes the contrariety of humors and political opinions, as well as economical views entertained by the visitors above mentioned furnish me with these facilities. As these persons are my authorities, I think it would be desirable for you to be informed of their position in society, in order to be able to ascertain their *weight*, that is, the measure of credence my assertions or statements may deserve.

I shall commence with my *recomendado* and designate him by the name of Don Antonio. You well know the reasons why I am compelled to use fictitious names and avoid exactness in minute details, from which this jealous government might *guess*, who are the persons to whom I allude. He is an honest, frank, generous person of transcendent abilities, of clear foresight, and prudence. This gives great weight to his opinions, if a correct idea can be formed from the number of persons who consult him and rely upon his advice, and the marks of admiration and esteem shown by all those who depend upon his decisions. He is liberal in politics, and even an advocate of the republican form of government. He does not, however, understand republicanism as it exists at the present time in several parts of the world, including our own country, and is, therefore, strenuously opposed to the

annexation of this Island to the United States. He even dislikes, in the present circumstances, the plan of emancipation from Spain, preferring a reform of the present system of government ; on which account he is called by his friend the *Concesionista*. You will hereafter be made acquainted with the reasons he adduces to prove that Spain would never lose the Island, if she should establish a thoroughly liberal form of government.

One of the persons who most frequently visit him, and whom I will call Don Plácido, is an old lawyer, on the eve of retiring from professional business, though he is continually making inquiries, as to the proceedings of the tribunals, and keeps a faithful record of all the wrongs committed by them, tracing to their true source the motives of all their decisions. He is also a living registry of the biographies and genealogies of the government officers and other persons : a depository of interesting anecdotes, and a severe, though learned critic of all events. His political opinions are mostly in opposition to those of Don Antonio ; but though they sometimes become angry in the course of their disputes, they are great friends and cannot remain separated from each other many days. In his opinion, Cuba can expect no good whatever from Spain. Being possessed of a wonderful memory, he is in the habit of bringing all questions to the test of facts. You will learn from his account of the late Cuban movements, various interesting particulars unknown to many who consider themselves well posted up in these matters, in regard to all the leaders in the revolutionary career of Cuba, either in the Island, or in the United States. Don Plácido must have been an eminent lawyer, and I believe that the interest which you may take in my letters, will be attributable to his profound remarks on the judicial system of this Island.

Another Creole who visits my *recomendado*, and whom I will call Don Evaristo, is an advocate of the *statu quo* in Cuba; he is not satisfied with the system of government, but he fears the effects of a revolution. Being a wealthy man, and living comfortably, he laments the crying evils committed by the government; but his indignation is never greatly excited, and he bears everything with patience, hoping for a favorable change of the Cabinet at Madrid, and fearing a sudden insurrection of the slaves. My observations warrant me in believing that this man represents a very numerous class of Creoles.

These are the coryphæi of our friendly meetings. The other persons coincide in a greater or less degree with their opinions; but there are two other who deserve a more particular notice. One of them is the eldest son of my *recomendado*, who is an abolitionist and a determined filibuster; the other is an *aplatanado* Spaniard, that is, one who has become identified with the interests of the country by a long residence, by the Creole children and grandchildren he has, by the extensive number of his relations and acquaintances, and by his old friendship towards Don Antonio, to whose father he was indebted for the first elements of his fortune. The political opinions he avows, are uttered, I believe, with a view to accommodate them to those of his associates. I also believe that, notwithstanding their intimacy with Don Cosme—as I will call him—our other personages are cautious in not declaring before him, *all* they think, in order, perhaps, not to hurt his feelings.

The circle is formed at dinner-time, but the most serious debates take place after having taken coffee, amidst the smoke of segars; and they very often continue until late in the evening. While at table, entertaining stories, ancient and modern, are narrated, all sprinkled with the

witty and often taunting and caustic remarks of the lady and her sprightly daughters, who are strongly opposed to Spaniards and to every thing which appertains to the Peninsula. The boys, who are thoroughly inoculated with filibusterism, enjoy the repartees, for their belief is unbounded in the most absurd accounts relating the imbecility, ignorance and weakness of Spain.

I listen to every thing, and occupy morning hours in recording facts and correcting the observations already recorded. I am styled *the Yankee*, and very often *Mr. Yankee*, or *Señor Yankee*, as they cannot accustom themselves to pronounce my name. Every one exerts himself to instruct and attract me to his party: they look upon me as if I were a Cuban, and I am treated in a frank and friendly manner. The Spaniard, however, sometimes looks at me in a manner that, I think, evinces his distrust, especially when I put some of my numberless questions. I glean an extensive knowledge of facts, manners &c. from their contradictory statements during conversation, and what I regret is that very seldom they all meet together. The most punctual at the meetings, however, are those whom I first named.

My task would be more easy, were I to communicate to you the substance of these conferences; but the plan I have adopted is preferable, as in giving a general and methodical idea of all matters of common interest, repetitions are avoided, and all the information acquired is thus transmitted in the shortest possible space. I will, therefore, continue this subject in my forthcoming letters, mingling but slightly in political discussions. My travelling impressions will follow next, as I promised, and then scenes of real life in Cuba. Lastly, the reader being in possession of these important data, and somewhat acquainted with the true state of the country, I will enter into

political affairs, and the full exposition of the doings, intrigues, and frauds committed by Cuban traitors, or foolishly presumptuous reformers, and also by Americans unworthy of confidence.

LETTER XVI.

Spanish officers—Captain Generals — Their powers—Their abuses—
Case of Larrazabal — Alderman Espelius — Arbitrary deportations — Ancient law of the Code of Indies — Bad consequences of their arbitrary acts — Captain Generals may adjudge concerning life or death — Details little known of the death of Crittenden and his companions — Concha's course in the affair of Pintó.

IN this letter I will begin to treat of the subject of the officers sent to Cuba by the Spanish government. I will write at some length respecting the Captain Generals, as the most important of all, but I will for the present only speak briefly about the others, not because the matter would be void of interest, which is not the case, but to prevent you from becoming wearied by long details. I intend also to be extremely cautious and sparing in my political remarks; in fact you may consider them as pencil sketches of the features of the leading officials in Cuba.

The Captain General's power is unlimited, for since eighteen hundred and twenty-five, discretionary powers have been granted to them, "to do every thing they may consider as expedient." These words recall to my memory the old Roman phrase *Caveant Consules*. The various administrative departments, however, are put in charge

of other officers ; but as the responsibility of the preservation of the Island devolves on that functionary alone, every measure which is resolved upon by the authorities, whatever their rank, must be approved by him before they can be carried into operation. There is then a law—for in Cuba they consider as a law every thing which is enacted by the Monarch, *quod Principi placuit*—which gives to Captain Generals the authority, and enables them to assume the character and exercise the despotism of dictators ; but it remains to be seen whether the authors of such a law possessed the right to establish it, or, as we say in America, whether it is a constitutional one or not.

Though it seems on the first view that municipal regulations belong exclusively to certain settled local authorities, the Captain Generals, whenever it pleases them, exercise their privilege of control. Extraordinary as this fact may seem to you, it can be easily explained by a mere reference to the case of the well known Spaniard named Lorenzo Larrazabal, which took place on the first day of the year eighteen hundred and fifty-four.

It is incumbent upon the Municipalities (Ayuntamientos) of the Island to choose on the first day of each year, the *alcaldes ordinarios* (Justices of the Peace). The nominations are submitted to the Captain General, and in case he does not give them his approval, a new election is made. In the aforesaid year, it was the good pleasure of His Excellency to confer the distinction of Alcalde, upon a Biscayan named Larrazabal, a Notary Public. By a gentle hint to the Aldermen before the election day, he expressed his wish for the nomination of this candidate. They were unwilling to gratify this inclination, but dared not resist it : a Spanish Alderman, Espelius, was the only one who opposed this unlawful meddling. Why did not others also disregard the insinuations of the Chief ? They

might have rightfully done so. Why did they not then ? I will now explain.

Captain Generals possess the incredible authority to dispatch to the Peninsula, or to other place whatever, any person, no matter what may be his rank or circumstances, provided they consider his living in Cuba as dangerous to the Spanish régime. They are not bound to explain the reasons they have for taking such a course : and all that is required from them is to send a mere notice to the government at Madrid. This, you are aware, is the fiat of deportation, a heart-rending punishment ; and, as is easily perceived, it can be inflicted on every inhabitant who has the misfortune to cause the least displeasure to His Excellency, though ~~he~~^{he} may not have committed any deed which could warrant the infliction of such a penalty.

There is an ancient law of the Code of the Indies (*Leyes de Indias*), which plainly forbids these outrageous proceedings ; but although it has not been expressly abrogated, it has been rendered void by the discretionary powers before alluded to, allowed to all successive Captain Generals, and which are known by the latin name of *omnimodæ* ; so that, it may be truly asserted that all the inhabitants of Cuba are entirely dependent on the supreme will of these military officers, and have, consequently, to surrender themselves to their caprices, even in matters which are placed by legal restrictions beyond their control.

Though you will easily foresee the sad results of such monstrous power, perhaps you will still be more indignant on learning that these functionaries may take the lives of whomsoever they choose for victims. Horrid and barbarous as this may appear to you, it is really so ; and hence the reason why Concha has been surnamed the executioner of Crittenden and his fifty companions, the murderer of Pintó, &c.

It is true that they have not legal authority to impose capital punishments by means of a simple verbal or written decree: it is also true that according to law, the judicial power must be nearly independent of the Governors; and lastly, I will admit that, were all the judges honorable men, as well as inflexibly just in the fulfilment of their duties, the Captain Generals might not be able to commit such a crime, because they cannot, even in their capacity of head of the army, duly condemn to death a private soldier until after several judicial proceedings in which he is constrained to follow the advice of counsel.

But these legal restrictions are a dead letter. In point of fact, a paramount ascendancy over the mind of the Judge must necessarily be exercised by Captain Generals on account of the power with which they are vested of removing all the officers of the Colony without even assigning a reason for the procedure. Those of the Military Commission, especially, are more effectually influenced by them, because they are indebted for their appointments to these high functionaries; and gratitude, or fear, combined with an easy acquiescence, make them blind instruments of these despots. The details of the execution of Crittenden strike us with many unfavorable impressions of the character of Señor Concha. Though much has been already said and written respecting this mournful catastrophe, I presume you are not in possession of the full particulars. The event has been greatly misrepresented by political parties; and I hope it may prove a gratification to you to receive an impartial account.

Those unfortunate men were taken on the open sea; they had parted from the invading corps of Lopez; they were completely unarmed; and presented conclusive proof of their repentance. If they intended to commit a crime, they were deterred from it in due time; and if those who

adhered to the invader to the last extremity incurred capital punishment, justice would require that those who abandoned him from the beginning should suffer a milder penalty. The companions of General Lopez, after killing Enna and many Spanish officers and privates, were sent to Ceuta; those of Crittenden, who did not shed blood, could not fairly be subjected to a military execution.

They were condemned and shot without a trial: such a course is not acknowledged by the laws of war, even when the enemy has been taken *with arms in hand*, and surrenders. On the other hand, the lenity of civilized nations requires that in all cases, where members are condemned to suffer, the leading characters only should be sacrificed; the less guilty having their sentences mitigated by a merciful commutation. Many requests were presented to Señor Concha to incline him to follow this latter course; the present Bishop, it is said, interposed also; and some affirm that there was a Judge of the Superior Court who advised the General to adopt this recognized custom.

The motives which urged the Captain General to refuse these representations were, as stated, highly shameful: the Chief of Police told him that if *all the Pirates* were not to be shot, the Catalonians would undoubtedly revolt and perhaps attack Concha himself; and the pusillanimous fear of these threats being carried into effect, induced him to shed so much blood.

Another charge has been preferred against Concha in relation to that dastardly affair. He might, they say, have devolved on the General commanding the fleet, the responsibility of the punishment to be inflicted on Crittenden's party, as having captured them, and also possessing the power to be their judge. It seems, then, that the Captain General endeavoured to *seek*, instead of *avoiding* the opportunity of accomplishing this sanguinary deed;

and if this be true, as the appearances indicate, there is a very strong foundation for the appellation of "The Tiger of Atarés," with which the Creoles have nicknamed this little tyrant.

His course in the trial of Ramon Pintó has strengthened the former suspicions of Concha's cowardice. It is an undeniable fact that the Catalonians, also on that occasion, demanded the sacrifice. Actuated by an atrocious malevolence, and without knowing whether their countryman was really guilty or not, they vociferously called for his head.

I should like to ask those men :—"What right have you to censure the precipitancy of Lynch Law?" This is applied in too violent a manner, and indeed, with an inconsiderate haste; but, at the same time, no doubt is ever entertained as to the culpability of the accused: on the contrary, that measure is always demanded by the notoriety of the crime, and the indignation produced by it, which are precisely the true causes of the precipitancy of the mob; and, notwithstanding the multiplicity of proofs, a jury is in all cases called, and an opportunity for defence allowed. What a striking contrast there is between these proceedings and the seeking of a man's life, only on account of the accusation of a single individual charging him, not with having perpetrated, but with the intention to perpetrate a crime!

It has been said that the death of Pintó was "a judicial murder:" this question may be answered by Spanish lawyers. For my own part, I can only affirm, that if that unfortunate man had been tried in New York, the evidence which in Cuba was considered sufficient to warrant his condemnation and execution, would not have justified the infliction of the slightest punishment there. The accusation was founded on the testimony of a single wit-

ness, a wretched villain, totally unworthy of belief, and especially so in a matter of such vital importance. The failure of the Judges to agree, the *Auditor de Guerra* (legal Advicer of Concha), voting for the life of Pintó, would have been sufficient cause for any General of more humane feelings, to lean to the side of mercy, and inflict a milder punishment. Concha was then placed between two fire ships : Was he actuated by the thirst of blood, or by the fear of the Catalonians ? Perhaps some would unhesitatingly answer : *By both.*

LETTER XVII.

*Trial*s of *Residencia*, a humbug — Astonishing results of the accusations made against Tacon — General Ricafort — Sanchez Lima — Delgado — Spoliations of the ancient Viceroy's — A double censure — Soler's escape — Don Jacobo de la Pezuela.

WERE you to read these letters to any of the Spaniards who are partizans of the political régime now in force in Cuba, and who consider their national honor interested in the justification of their government in all matters, he would return you an answer that, perhaps, would puzzle you for a seasonable reply, and I almost fear you would admit he was right, thinking that I am not fully informed on the subject. He would say that the laws of the Indies imperatively demand that all the Governors going out of office, as well as their subordinates, should render an account of all the abuses of power committed during their administration. That law, it is true, exists, and it is also true that several officials in minor situations have been severely corrected: some of them have even been subjected to the most extreme poverty by the imposition of heavy fines. These fines, however, have been diverted to the royal treasury instead of being devoted to the indemnification of those who suffered from those abuses. But ask those who would quote that law to you if they know of

any Captain General who has been punished by the slightest penalty? They would, undoubtedly, answer "No," if they spoke the truth; and then, ask them whether they do, in good faith, believe that all those functionaries have gone out of office free from stain—And the same answer would be returned.

The law relative to *residencias* can certainly be read in the Code, but, as this, like nearly all the Spanish laws, is not applied whenever Judges prefer to neglect it; as there are not in Spain any means of enforcing the judicial responsibility, the courts disregard all the enactments that do not suit their interested views. No one of the Captain Generals has been the subject of more general complaint than Don Miguel Tacon; but no one has received such liberal rewards from the Supreme government of Spain: no one obtained so brilliant a triumph, as he did, in his *residencia*. It seems impossible that among the great number of his accusers, who exposed themselves to the risk of being condemned to pay costs and other penalties, not a single one should be right in their charges. The only individual, who atoned for Tacon's sins, was Suarez, whom he consulted from choice, instead of employing the adviser appointed by the Cabinet. According to learned lawyers, for this act he must have partaken the responsibility with the Counsel; Suarez, however, suffered all the punishment; Don Miguel, equally guilty with Suarez, besides being the sole author of the arbitrary proceedings, was recognized as having fulfilled his duty to the full satisfaction of the Queen. To remove all doubts from your mind as to the partiality and injustice committed by the Judge against the claimants, there is a conclusive proof: since that date, sham trials of this kind have ceased, the inhabitants being well aware that they are but a mockery of law and justice.

Until the year eighteen hundred and thirty two in which Don Mariano Ricafort was installed as Captain General, the Cubans had enjoyed the good fortune of being frequently governed by true gentlemen. This functionary, however, was accompanied on his arrival by a retinue of adventurers from the Peninsula, who landed here with the avowed purpose of enriching themselves as rapidly as possible. A Colonel named Sanchez Lima, brother in law of the Captain General, not only sold every office, but by bribes interposed his influence with the Judges, in order to obtain false decisions. Another, called Delgado, returned to Madrid scarcely one year after his departure, and astonished all classes by his ostentation, luxury and the insolence of his demeanor; and even the simple Adjutants engaged in impudent and profitable intrigues.—It was generally believed that the General did not plunder, though he gave leave to his wife and relations to do it, following precisely the same tactics formerly pursued by the Viceroy of Mexico, in order to preserve untarnished the splendor of their authority, and transact at the same time a lucrative business.

One of the protégés of Señor Ricafort, Soler by name, had gained his whole confidence. Although two censors of the press had been long established to prevent the publication of political writings, or those contrary to sound morality, the General established a second censorship, in order to review the papers already examined by the other, and entrusted Soler with the office. It was supposed that this man possessed learning, and was of good morals; but whether he had or had not acquired the former of these qualifications, he only afforded in Cuba irrefragable proofs of being entirely destitute of the latter; for, to cap the climax of his excesses, he enticed away and carried to New Orleans an unmarried daughter of an offi-

cer in the army, and created matter for the tongue of scandal, such as seldom before excited the condemnation of the Habaneros.

Such is the character of the Captain General, whom Don Jacobo de la Pezuela calls upright (*recto*). This Señor Pezuela has written a "Historical Essay on the Island of Cuba," and he adds that Ricafort's administration was *weak*, "on account (a very funny observation!) of his old wounds." The only thing the historian relates of the officers that General took with him to Havana, is that "they did not deserve the confidence he bestowed on them." You may see here a new specimen of the manner in which Spaniards write History. This same Pezuela, some years after the publication of his book, was removed from a military office which he held in Cuba, for reasons not very creditable to him. This occurrence amazed me greatly; because I had read a certain paragraph in his "Essay," in which he paints in the darkest colors those officers "without honor," who gather riches from the pickings of their offices.

LETTER XVIII.

General Don Miguel Tacon and his administration — His partizans and adversaries — Satirical remark of a lady — Character of Tacon — His pernicious associates — An honorable exception— Anecdotes of the Commissioners Aldermen and several others— Banishments.

It is reasonable that you should ask my opinion of General Tacon and his administration. Though this is a difficult subject, I will enter into it with the same frankness that I would use with you in a friendly conversation if we were on board a steamboat bound on a pleasant excursion to West Point.

An endless variety of opinions are embraced on this subject. The numerous partizans of that General assure that he has done many good things ; his adversaries, on the contrary, maintain that he has performed many bad acts ; and I have drawn the inference that if he was the author of some good, he was also the perpetrator of many evils. Such a thing must necessarily occur with a man of his character, upon whom an unlimited trust is conferred, affording him opportunities of fully gratifying his caprices. Every man, however naturally good, if left in the uncontrolled possession of power, will by degrees become arbitrary in his views, and despotic in his acts.

So deep was the rancor of parties under his administration, that it is not yet appeased. A lady, whose husband was accustomed to win money at the game of *monte*, is unwilling to ascribe any merit to him. It having been observed to her that it was undeniable that he repressed murders and other outrages, she exclaimed: "But we were better off in the time of the *puñaladas* (dirks and daggers)."

I flatter myself with the hope that future historians, if impartial and dispassionate, will speak of Tacon in similar terms to those which I am now about to use with regard to him, because I have carefully procured reliable information on this matter from all quarters.

It is a well established trait of the man that he was always ardently desirous of promoting good order. I have been assured that on hearing of the committal of any wrong, or ascertaining the existence of any abuse, he became highly excited, and, on account of his impetuous character, his face and whole frame gave proofs of the most violent indignation. Had this good disposition been properly cultivated, you know it would have produced most beneficial results. He, however, either through want of reflection, or ignorance of the true principles of morality, thought that all means were lawful, if they kept in view the attainment of a desirable end. In order to suppress vice he employed vicious men as his instruments, and seconded their acts by his own unworthy proceedings. He protected denouncers and loafers, and encouraged unbecoming and infamous inquiries, not disdaining to notice even anonymous communications, believing, on account of his extraordinary suspiciousness, that these missives contained some sprinklings of truth. In my humble opinion, the maxim "*Cum finem vult Deus, media probat,*" is not an exponent of sound morals, except

when the word *honesta* is fully understood. Are you not of this school, my dear Charles?

He abhorred, but did not condemn the wicked. On the contrary, he believed it to be lawful to profit by their services; he was surrounded by them, and they apparently enjoyed his unlimited confidence. By this unwise course, he indirectly increased the power, the prestige, and the influence of those despicable men, affording them, unconsciously, fresh opportunities to commit crimes, because the vulgar, on seeing the intimacy and the kindness with which he treated these offenders, supposed them to possess more favor than they really did, and those deceitful appearances were largely improved to their profit.

Three persons were seen in the afternoon of a certain day descending the stairs with Tacon to take a walk. Who could doubt that they were his friends? Two of them preceded him: on his left was the person who narrated this anecdote. This gentleman was addressed by the General midway down the stairs: "What a designing fellow is that on the right hand,!" said he—"Yes," answered the other, "but the one on the left is not a whit the less."—"At least he is not a hypocrite," observed Tacon.—He was well aware of the wickedness of both, but condescended to make them his companions in the proposed short ride.

On the same occasion another occurrence took place, which I will mention now lest it should escape my memory. The clerk of a Notary presented to the General a stamped paper and a pen with ink to sign an *auto* (judicial decree). He read it with great attention, and handed it to the clerk saying: "Tell Señor Suarez that this is not what I told him."—While reading the defence of Tacon, and seeing it alleged that his legal adviser was alone responsible for all his judicial errors, I never fail to

recollect this fact, and I feel my indignation rise at so impudent an instance of perfidy.

It would be enough to publish a simple list of the protégés of Tacon, in order to convince all who know them that it is impossible to justify him. Among them we find—an *Auditor de guerra* (Counsel for the War Department), whose abuses more than once produced great astonishment at the Supreme Court of Madrid, on seeing them recorded in the law-proceedings carried to it in consequence of appeals made from him—an assessor of the *Intendente*, who, some years afterwards surprised the people of Havana by presenting himself among them invested with the office of *Rejente* of the *Audiencia*, having procured it by means, it is generally believed, of a very shameful intrigue—an adviser, the well known Suarez, who, after having given manifold proofs of a venal character, during a certain judicature, was the terror of all those who being accused, had not the means of satisfying his avarice, and were of course sentenced without their defence or proofs being read—a perverse lawyer, who having been a *fiscal* (Ministerial officer) for many years, took pleasure in exaggerating his accusations, causing anguish to the accused, in order to compel them to supply him with money, and after having extorted large sums from them by the dread of punishment, he did not scruple to contradict the impeachments which he had formerly presented. Two Colonels, the one loaded with debts, and the other with crimes—the vile myrmidon Moya—the infamous mulatto Valdés, formed a portion of this reckless gang—— Permit me, however, to descontinue this black list of miserable scoundrels; such a task would be too repugnant to me, besides being very long, for I have been told of only one honorable exception: the Colonel of the Military Engineers Don Felix Lemaur, whose cha-

racter was distinguished for the most inflexible integrity and superior science.

Tacon exhibited himself to the Cubans as the quintessence of despotism, because they had not seen till then any thing to which it bore a resemblance. In fact, he was unwilling to recognize any limit to his authority; he boldly violated all the practices and forms established for the administration of justice; he made void public contracts, whenever he chose to imagine that they were founded on knavery. Acts of this kind, which destroy the stability of agreements, obliterate all honorable transactions, and impair confidence, justly deserve public reprobation. On a certain occasion, however, one of these acts gained for Tacon the praise of the Habaneros. The contract for cleaning the streets of Havana had been obtained at auction on terms too favorable to the bidder, who procured it by bribes given to two Aldermen (*Comisarios*) of the *Ayuntamiento*. The bribes consisted of a costly *quitrin* which was presented to each of them. Having heard of the affair, Tacon caused the contract to be annulled; at the ensuing auction, much better terms for the City were obtained, and the *padres patria*, city fathers, had no objection to pay their compliments to the Chief for the favorable results of the business. "Yes"—answered Tacon—"but there will be no carriages this time." Eye-witnesses assert that the blush of shame did not mantle very deeply on the cheeks of these *City Worthies*: they, on the contrary, affirm that they smiled on hearing the remarkably witty saying of his Excellency, who, with great justice, gave them a direct insult: the public laughed at the Aldermen, and applauded Tacon.

It is also undeniable that amidst the terrors which prevailed throughout the Island, the only persons who were reconciled to the government which caused such a lamen-

table state of things, was that privileged class who composed the *Camarilla*, or the *coterie* of Tacon's private informers. They were able at every moment to observe the lashing of the lion's tail, in order to be admonished whether he was disposed or not to devour them; but there was not a man, however inoffensive or honest he might be, who could go coolly to bed without fearing to be awakened at midnight and carried without a hearing to jail or to the vessel which was to convey him as an exile from all he held dear in life.

Some persons say that only bad characters were trampled upon by the Governor. Admitting this to be a fact; yet much time necessarily elapsed before this fact became generally known; and in the meantime all classes were in a state of fearful uncertainty. It seems to me that the Spanish rulers have never attentively considered how heavy a punishment banishment is: otherwise they would not so readily apply it to the Cubans without a fair trial. In the greatest number of cases, the poor families of the banished are the greatest sufferers: misery, vice and crime are the inheritance of the sons and daughters reluctantly left behind by their natural protectors. The authors of such arbitrary and despotic measures must be alone responsible.

Among the successors of Tacon, there are some who have far surpassed him in misgovernment. O'Donnell, Cañedo and Concha distinguished themselves by a manifestation of hatred to the inhabitants of Cuba. Through the orders and the subsequent approval of the last named, General Leimerich seized in the same day eleven fathers of families having in all more than fifty children, and without any trial, sent them to Spain. This atrocious barbarity instead of being duly punished by the Spanish Queen, has been rewarded by sending again to Cuba the same *man who inflicted so many evils on this Island.*

LETTER XIX.

Ezpeleta — Anglona — Valdés — Judge Zarco del Valle — Judicial intrigues — Judge Laguna.

EZPELETA, successor to Tacon, allowed more freedom to the Cubans, though he respected the rules established by his predecessor. He discontinued, however, the persecutions carried on by the former. As he was a tall, meagre and colorless man, he is styled by my friend Don Plácido "The pale shadow of Don Miguel." This same nickname may be generally applied to all those who held the reins of government down to the administration of O'Donnell, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Prince Anglona did not endeavor to suppress gambling, but, on the contrary, encouraged and favored it. General Valdés, who is celebrated as the restorer of the University, obtained a high character for honesty and disinterestedness from the whole of the community. On going out of office, it was rumored that he was very short of money, and a collection was made in order to enable him to return to Spain. I think that the allegation of such extreme poverty is rather absurd in a person who had been in an office receiving so immense an amount of fees. If some of these officers have done any good, in spite of the frequent opportunities and inducements offered them to do

evil, their merits will be highly exalted, and their renown materially heightened ; but I believe that such characters have been very few, and it is long since they exercised their philanthropic dispositions.

I will relate to you an occurrence which being minutely described, will give you a correct idea of the temper of General Valdés, and also of several legal proceedings. If he should ever happen to read this letter, and see all these details faithfully recorded and revealed, they will not fail to excite his astonishment. Every deed, however well concealed for a time, must one day come to light.

A lawyer, whom I will designate by the letter F., was entrusted with the prosecution of a suit involving a very large amount of property. A decision was to be rendered on the second trial by a tribunal in which the Auditor was to deliver his opinion in conjunction with a Counsellor appointed by the Captain General. Any verdict this Court might agree upon, was to be carried into effect immediately, and finally it would determine whether F's party should or should not continue in the possession of a capital of six or seven hundred thousand dollars. In the latter case, he still had the resource of appealing to the higher Courts of Spain ; but he would then have been deprived not only of the enjoyment of so large an amount of money, but also of the means of *buying his rights* in the Peninsula. The appointment that Valdés was about to make was of the greatest moment, as the fate of that party was entirely dependent on the honesty of the Counsellor. Honesty was also very slippery amidst the inducements which it was likely were being offered, when such an immense amount of property was involved in the decision.

The lawyer ascertained that several competitors were *endeavoring* to be elected, and the excuse they offered to

the Captain General for their fervent desire, was that they wished to obtain the *asesoria*, (fee), derived from the verdict, which, in this case, was not less than eight hundred dollars. You may consider this as too large a remuneration for a work of six or eight hours at the desk ; but it is by no means so, and they sometimes amount to larger sums, as they are regulated by the number of pages of the judicial records of each law-suit. The ambition of the candidates was not restrained to the fee: they wished to gain the *gratitude* of the party in whose favor the decision would be rendered, and in these cases that feeling is estimated by the number of doubloons which they receive.

One of the most active and barefaced solicitors was a Judge of the Superior Court, named Don Manuel Remon Zarco del Valle. He explained to F. through a common friend, that he wanted to obtain the appointment because he needed the amount of the fee in order to realize a contemplated voyage to the Peninsula. He also requested the lawyer not to challenge him if he was elected and exert besides all his influence to procure the commission for him, affirming that being well satisfied of the justice of his party (he used this language without being at all acquainted with the nature of the suit), he could rely on having a verdict awarded in conformity with his ardent wishes. The lawyer did not put much confidence in the promises of the Judge, who was a person of bad repute, and instead of promoting his appointment, went promptly to see Valdés, and requested him, in the name of his party, not to elect Judge Zarco. He could not, however, avow his true motives for such a course lest he should incur the vengeance of Zarco: he was, therefore, compelled to conceal the bad opinion he entertained about the morals of his candidate, and even the unbecoming and suspicious step he had just taken with him. He only alleged

that Zarco, being an acquaintance and frequent visitor of his opponent, he could not but feel great anxiety as to the result. He added, against his true convictions, "that he was far from doubting the integrity of that Judge." The Governor was, perhaps, influenced by the evident justice of the request, and chose the Assessor Don José Laguna. The same evening at a party assembled at the Palace, he thus addressed him: "I have sent you to-day a very good commission: it may yield you twenty or perhaps thirty thousand dollars." But Valdés knew very well that the legal fee would not exceed eight hundred dollars: this sum was all that Laguna was fairly entitled to receive. Did not the Captain General by this speech offer a strong temptation and inducement to him to ask for more? He certainly did, as you will see.

The lawyer lost no time in paying a visit to the Assessor in order to sound his intentions. The newly appointed official having meditated on the real meaning of Valdés' words, thought, it seems, that he might draw from his situation something more than the simple fee. He spoke, then, to F. very mysteriously relative to a document unfavorable in its nature to his client; F. suspected him of making this statement for the purpose of extortion; but in the collection of papers there was another document that gave evidence of the former one being false. He showed it to Laguna, and the latter was compelled to acknowledge the fact. Laguna, then, informed F. of Valdés' expression. What was his design? The dullest man might have conjectured the motive, but had the lawyer been less sagacious, or looked carelessly at his client's concerns, the latter would have made some sacrifice to gratify that Judge. Fortunately he did not; he gained his cause; but Zarco bowed him everlasting hatred.

LETTER XX.

O'Donnell — Spoliations — His abusive conduct towards Don Rosendo Fernandez — The poet Plácido — Selling of bottles.

DON Leopoldo O'Donnell is charged with having commenced the spoils-system which has not yet been discontinued, nor is it probable that it will ever cease. The fame of his brave military exploits had preceded his arrival; perhaps it was honorably acquired in Spain; perhaps he deserved it among armed men; and it was an easy thing to appear much more courageous among an unarmed people. Wolves seem far more valiant among sheep than when mixing with their own species.

One of O'Donnell's first acts, however, did not give a very promising demonstration of his personal bravery. It was slapping with his own hand, and in his palace, a meanspirited *Montaños* (a native of Santander), named Rosendo Fernandez. This miserable fellow intended to appropriate for himself a lottery ticket which had drawn the highest premium of twenty thousand dollars. Having been summoned before the General, he alleged several circumstances to prove that the ticket belonged to him. His statements may have been true; but O'Donnell disbelieved them, and resolved the question off hand without observing any formalities. He adjudged that Fernandez

should pay within twenty-four hours that large sum, and informed him that on failing to do so, he would be sent to jail, and afterwards to Spain. You see that this sentence had the merit of brevity at least.

Besides this infliction, he imposed another also on the *Montaños*. A few days before, the same O'Donnell had transmitted to Fernandez a diploma granting him the cross of the order of Charles the Third, which had been sent to him by his protector General Valdés. O'Donnell now told him that he was unworthy of such a distinction, and that he must return the diploma immediately. To deprive a knight of an order in so violent a manner, and when he had already displayed his imposing decoration, was an extremely arbitrary act, because it inferred degradation; and this could not properly be done until a formal law-suit had been carried through the stated proceedings. Fernandez was completely bewildered on hearing this unexpected and very extraordinary order: he complained, he protested, and very justly insinuated that "he did not recognize the right of his Excellency to exercise so great a stretch of power." On hearing this observation, the *brave* O'Donnell, amidst his bayonets, slapped the poor fellow over the face, and roughly forced him out of his room.

As this single fact would go far to furnish you with a correct idea of the political state of Cuba, I believe it is too important to be passed over without stating its proofs: I think these will appear decisive to you from what remains to be said.

Fernandez left the Palace, greatly agitated in mind to consult his lawyer, Dr. Muñoz Izaguirre, who being absent in the country, he went to a certain Magistrate who is at present in Madrid. I cannot tell you his name, *because* having declined to appear as Fernandez' Attor-

ney on that occasion, it is very probable that he will prefer to remain still unknown, as he is to-day more than ever, under the grasp of O'Donnell, the present king of Spain.

Said magistrate, taking interest for the plaintiff directed him to a lawyer, who after becoming acquainted with the circumstances of the case, wrote a memorial, which *I have seen*, stating all the facts as I have represented them, and alleging that the laws forbade verbal decisions in lawsuits, whenever the controverted amount exceeded one hundred dollars. The petition ended by praying His Excellency to be pleased to declare that his decision ordering the payment of twenty thousand dollars should be considered not as a command, but as a simple advice. In regard to the surrendering of the diploma, he also requested him to be pleased to repeal the order, because a solemn trial with all due legal proceedings was requisite for such delivery. I have *seen, read* and *admired* the extraordinary answer to that memorial, and I remember well its own words; "It was certainly an advice that I gave to one whom I considered to be a gentleman." The order was then abrogated, but the atrocious outrage committed on Fernandez could not be annulled.

The following are the proofs of the correctness of my statements: first, the publicity of the fact in Havana; second, the recital of the affair made to the lawyer by Don Rosendo: third, and this of itself is a sufficient proof, the contents of the petition, kept in the archives of the *Secretaria*; as it is incredible that the facts should have been misrepresented to the same person who witnessed them.

O'Donnell seems to have thought he had acquired new honors by this abusive behavior, for from that day he began to require all persons meeting him in the streets to

take off their hats. On a certain morning, he went out to ride accompanied by an officer of his staff, and passed through one of the streets of the ward of Jesus Maria, where a few young men were talking and smoking their segars. As O'Donnell's arrival at Havana had taken place shortly before, it is very likely that they did not recognize him. While passing, he looked sharply at them, and after proceeding a short distance, he turned his horse and asked them in an angry tone, "Why did you not salute me?" Every one then, took off his hat, and he, somewhat abashed, passed on. I have been informed that there is not any Spanish law which imposes upon Citizens the duty O'Donnell required them to perform, although it is true that in Cuba, as it has been said, Governors are the *incarnate law*.

This General, notwithstanding the short period of his administration, returned to Spain loaded with a larger amount of spoils than any of his predecessors. I will not, however, dwell upon a fact so well known, but will adhere to my purpose of telling you only what is not to be found in books. I will therefore point out the sources of his present wealth, which, it is stated, even Queen Isabella envies. They were: the fee collected on each African negro introduced into the Island; the proceeds from the hiring of *emancipados* (those who had been taken by British cruissers); the sale of the niches built by him in the cemetery; the profit derived from the cleaning of the privies of the city (which it is affirmed by many, belonged to him); the several monopolies he carried on through Brigadier Paniagua, and Marquis Esteva.

I will not mention the details of the conspiracy of colored people which he professed to have discovered, and which some suspect to have been a sham affair; nor will I *describe* the dreadful tortures inflicted upon a great num-

ber of innocent men, among whom was the celebrated Plácido, a Poet who was shot and who will cause the memory of O'Donnell to be execrated by future generations. Finally, I will postpone for my purely descriptive letters the account of another ridiculous deed to which the burlesque name of "Milk-Punch Battle" (*Batalla del Punche de leche*) was given, and will end the chapter on this General by acquainting you with a fact not generally known about his wife.

There was on the first floor of the Palace a room where all the empty bottles used by Captain Generals during many years had been kept; and as nobody ever thought of appropriating these articles, their number was always increasing, until Señora Doña Manuela, O'Donnell's wife, considered it expedient to put a stop to this endless accumulation. She, perhaps, considered her husband the lawful heir of all his predecessors, and therefore caused all the bottles to be carefully counted under her own eyes, and had the good fortune to sell them at a pretty good price. It is possible, however, that, on her arrival at Spain, she secured from those predecessors, who are still living, the confirmation of her title to the proceeds from the sale of the bottles. It is said that the subsequent residence of Cañedo at Havana caused the room to become full again, this General having been very fond of wines—but I have not been able to ascertain the truth of the assertion.

LETTER XXI.

Roncali — His gloomy reception — His expeditious manner of deciding law-suits — The compulsory agreements — An extraordinary invention to extort a dower — Roncali's mendacity — He falls from his horse — His policy — His fears as compared with Concha's — Cañedo — The Marquis de la Pezuela.

THE entrance of General Roncali, Count of Alcoy, upon the Government of Cuba, took place under very unpropitious circumstances. O'Donnell did not conceal the sorrow produced by the unpleasant misfortune of being removed from a golden stream before becoming satiated. A few days before the arrival of Roncali, he retired to the *Quinta* (country-seat for Captain Generals near Havana), carrying with him even the most trifling pieces of furniture and every household article. The new Governor's family were received by O'Donnell with insulting coolness; and the first night, they found themselves without a single bed to sleep upon.

The most noteworthy feature of Roncali's administration was the new method he established in order to suppress all judicial proceedings. Being aware of the numerous law-suits that existed in Havana, he devised an *easy way* of working this inexhaustible mine for his own

advantage. The discovery, indeed, had already been made by O'Donnell ; but the latter did not know how to follow the vein he had struck. Roncali at once perceived the enormous power with which he was invested, and taking every possible advantage of it, he sometimes compelled parties who appeared before him, when acting in the capacity of a Judge, to sign papers containing falsehoods. Will you consider this improbable ? In New York, indeed, the people would have undoubtedly kicked such a Judge out of the Court ; but matters are quite different in Havana, and if such an attempt had been made, the Captain General would have caused every one of the mob to be shot.

I will describe to you one of these sessions. The *Cadi* used to sit in a very easy chair, the only one in the room, and persons going to transact business there, had to stand up all the time, while our Mandarin was comfortably lodged, holding usually a segar in his mouth. One of the Judges of the Superior Court (Audiencia Pretorial), Zarco, of whom I have already spoken, upon going to take leave of him, before departing for Spain, was treated in the same manner, after being kept waiting for a long time in the antechamber. "I wish you a happy voyage," was the General's answer, without taking the trouble even to rise from his chair. The news of this incident spread with the rapidity of an electric spark through the whole antechamber, and was received with general merriment, as the object of the rebuff was a person whom nobody esteemed. A General, dressed in full costume, covered with crosses and bending with years (he was over seventy), received a similar rebuff. The ladies—but it is sufficient to say that there was only one seat in the room, and that its occupant was never willing to resign it.

A constable (*alguacil*) was stationed at the door with a

list of names in his hand, from which he called out the plaintiff and defendant, who then entered the room. The first named briefly related his case and the latter replied, after which Roncali decided on the spot, and said : "Go and draw up the act." They went out to the hall, and after the case was compendiously written, as well as the defendant's reply, the words "they *agreed* upon," were added, and the decision set down. The plaintiff then paid all the costs, which was the leading object, and the suit was ended. The decision appeared to be not a true judgement of the case, but an arrangement or compromise between the parties. Those who refused to sign such a falsehood were taken again by the clerk before the Captain General, who used to say; "Go, go and sign it." Nobody dared to remonstrate; all obeyed. Is not this humble submissiveness sufficient of itself to show a degree of despotic power which cannot be experienced in Turkey?

I will relate an instance of this manner of deciding which has the peculiarity that one of the sufferers is now living in New York. The history is rather long, but I think that the large amount of information it furnishes, warrants its recital.

The General's wife brought with her from Spain a servant girl, who married shortly after her arrival. She gave her as a dower an office for her husband, who was therefore created Captain of the ward of Peñalver, in the city of Havana. The object was to enable the new Captain to derive the greatest possible advantage from his office. He knew what he was about, and had scarcely sat down in his office for the first time, when he began to impose fines for violations of the police regulations. As it will be seen, some of these violations were falsely supposed, in order to get money, because one third of the fines belonged to him.

A lawyer, whom I do not name at his request, was summoned to pay eight dollars fine "on account of his groom having run when taking the horses to bathe." The groom, being brought before the Captain, denied the charge, telling him at the same time that it was wholly false: The appearances were all in favor of the groom's statements, because otherwise both he and the horses should have been taken to the station house. A* (as we will designate the lawyer), then remarked that he would not submit to such an *imposition*, as he relied on the word of his groom; that the officer, according to law, was held to prove the charge by witnesses; and that he was not obliged to the payment because the officer himself confessed that there were no witnesses at all.

The Captain seemed to acknowledge these reasons, and retired apparently satisfied; but came two days afterwards, and showed to A.* an order from the Captain General which read thus: "If the lawyer who is the subject of the above report is the *officer* of the same name, (he was), he is hereby summoned to pay fifty dollars fine; and if he is any other person, sixteen, as a penalty for the words he has uttered." He replied: "How is this? Do they condemn me without a hearing?" and made up his mind to go and see Roncali immediately. He changed his mind afterwards, and paid the fifty dollars, which, according to a statement published in the *Gaceta*, were applied to a charitable institution. He considered all appeal useless when he ascertained the circumstances attending the appointment of the officer. Other persons (one was the Marquis of Aguas Claras), who were also fined by the same Judge on the same false ground, and who probably were ignorant of the aforesaid circumstance (that of the dowry), being unwilling to submit to such barefaced extortion, went to see Roncali, hoping to obtain

redress. The rascal despot showed himself highly enraged, and uttering very hard words, ordered them to pay the fine forthwith.

You may easily imagine that it was necessary to fulfil the promise and to realize the amount offered to the servant girl. Many of the inhabitants of the ward of Peñalver had, therefore, the *pleasure* of contributing a fair allowance to the dowry of Mrs. Roncali's chambermaid, though they had not calculated upon that unexpected taxation.

The silence of the lawyer, and the quietness with which he submitted to such despotic plunder, seemed something strange to Roncali. Perhaps he feared his vengeance, and wished to gain his friendship, as may be easily imagined from the facts I am going to relate.

Over eighteen months had elapsed since the previous occurrences. The lawyer was one day obliged to appear before the Captain General as Attorney for a poor man, who, on account of being paralytic, was prevented from going personally. He had been sued by a grocer in order to make him pay for provisions furnished. The lawyer acknowledged the debt, but alleged several facts which were communicated to him by his client, and which, as he afterwards ascertained, were not very correct. The plaintiff contradicted them, but Roncali did not pay any attention to his words, and believing all that the lawyer said, asked him (the lawyer), showing evidences of partiality in his favor, and marks of strong affection, what he proposed as a settlement of the question. A.* offered a compromise, whereupon the General, without allowing the grocer to speak, ordered the act to be drawn up on those terms, in spite of all the remonstrances of the opposite party.

The lawyer was in the act of leaving the room when

Roncali called him, and said in an exceedingly familiar manner : "Mr. A.*, if you have been once fined, I have showed you to-day that I appreciate you as you deserve. I have also had the pleasure of given a favorable report to the Supreme government about the proposal you have made." He alluded to a proposal addressed long before to Madrid by A.*, and it was afterwards ascertained that no such report was ever given. "Had your Excellency," replied the lawyer, "heard me, I should not have been fined." Roncali, on hearing this just charge, returned these words : "And did you come to see me in order to be heard ?"—"Certainly, I did not," answered A.* thinking that it was not only useless, but even dangerous to add : "It was your Excellency's duty to call and hear me before deciding the question. As your Excellency's determination, moreover, was to endow your wife's chambermaid, I should have been treated like the Marquis of Aguas Claras and others."

Count de Alcoy had the misfortune to fall from his horse and break one of his arms. The Surgeons were prevented from performing the operation properly, as he bade them not to proceed, being unable to bear the pain longer.

This would seem rather curious in the biography of a courageous soldier. Historians will, therefore, omit, and even deny it, if necessary. I could produce, however, as witnesses Doctors Gutierrez and Valle: to the first of whom he said, pronouncing at the same time an oath, forced out by the pain, "You are a brute."

I have given these details in order to introduce the following remarkable fact. On the event of the fall and its further consequences being known, much sympathy was manifested towards the General ; but many *sympathizers* hoped, that is, had the *desire* that it would be necessary to cut off his arm, or at least that it would become dry and useless in after life.

This shows the hatred of the Cuban people to the government represented by Captain Generals, because Roncali had no personal enemies; and impartial historians will speak of him in favorable terms. Being free from the faint-hearted fears, as well as the blood-thirsty disposition of Concha, he had the talent to understand the political state of the Island much better than the latter, and to restore order without recurring to violent measures. It is said that he every day received denunciations against many persons suspected of being filibusters; and that being one evening urged by the Counsellor of war Armero, who was considered a very stupid man, to try all those denounced, he took the list in which their names were written, and burnt it up before all the persons forming the circle.

Nevertheless, he became seriously alarmed at the news of the landing of Lopez at Cardenas, left the capital without garrison, sent every hour commands and countermands, and gave strong proofs of an extraordinary dread. The cause of this was that he, on the one hand, knew and feared his adversary, and on the other, thought that his generous undertaking would meet with the support of the inhabitants, who were admirers of Lopez, and hated the colonial system of government in Cuba. Greater alarm and more serious fears were entertained by Concha when that galant hero came again to Playitas, according to the opinion of those who lived near both on those different occasions. It is said that the latter was then seized by such terror that in a moment of trouble he exclaimed, almost weeping, that when he left Madrid an idea got hold of his mind that he was going to be the last Spanish Governor of Havana. Some persons affirm, I do not know with what degree of certainty, that from the landing of the expedition till the seizure of Lopez, he was scarcely ever

seen eating or sleeping. Roncali's fears were only temporary, but those of Concha are perpetual: the former might have been produced by surprise, but the latter evince something like cowardice.

General Concha, who as you are aware, succeeded Roncali in the command, made his appearance like a conqueror: he expected to find the Island in a complete state of revolt, and on descrying its shores, he anticipated a fight before getting a foothold on land. The government of Madrid had increased his salary from about twenty-thousand dollars yearly, to fifty, to compensate for certain fees which his predecessors had enjoyed besides their salary, and which he renounced. It was rumored that for this large increase they took into consideration what the slave trade, which he earnestly promised to stop, had netted to former Governors; but as we all know that such has not been the case, an opportunity was afforded him of becoming rich sooner than others.

Cañedo, the foolish and corrupt General who came after Concha, made himself odious on account of his bad feelings against the Creoles, and above all, by committing that hideous act of cruelty on the patriots named Cristo and Gonzalez, who having been sentenced to suffer death by the garrote, were taken to the scaffold, though he had resolved, in consequence perhaps of a royal order, to commute the punishment the day before the execution was going to take place, as is proved by the fact that the decree had been printed on the evening of that day. He thought to enjoy the anguish of the victims, but was greatly disappointed as they walked to the spot of the execution with calmness and dignity.

He was followed by the Marquis Pezuela, a prudent and truly courageous gentleman, who allowed liberty to breathe to those Creoles who were unjustly suspected of

filibusterism. He quickly perceived that the number of men of resolution was very much reduced, and that the fears of his predecessors and of the Spaniards were groundless. For this reason, he, like Roncali, paid no attention to vile informers, and discontinued the persecutions carried on by former Governors.

This honorable course procured for him the hatred of the natives of old Spain, who showed their uneasiness in several ways, and professed to feel great joy when his successor arrived. Concha's efforts are always directed to inculcate in the mind of the government of the Metropolis the idea that he is quenching a volcano : his dreams are of conspiracies, murders, and filibusters. He has not judgement and courage enough to perceive that although the whole people of Cuba are averse to the Spanish rule, few men have, as yet, seriously endeavored to overthrow it.

LETTER XXII.

General Commanders or Governors of the Departments — General Lorenzo's pronunciamiento — P. Valiente — Superintendent Pinillos, Count of Villanueva — His character — Large present made to him — His protégés — Colonel Romy — Pinillo's devotedness to Christina — Bishops — Espada — Fleix y Solans — Mendo — A new kind of piracy.

THE system of government in Cuba being rather military, the General Commanders, or Governors of the Departments, are next in rank to the Captain General. They are invested in their respective districts with almost the same powers that he is, though they are his subordinates in their military capacity. Many questions, however, have arisen on several occasions as to their respective jurisdictions.

One of these chiefs, Don Manuel Lorenzo, undertook a movement in favor of liberal principles, in the year eighteen hundred and thirty six, which would have entirely changed the political régime of Cuba, and allowed her to participate of the freedom enjoyed in the Peninsula. His plan extended even to arming the people order to defeat the troops sent against him by Tacon; but through the private advice of persons who feared the consequences, he was induced to give up his enterprise. The most extraordinary thing in the whole affair, is that one of those who influenced him to this disgraceful retrocession was the

same Porfirio Valiente, who acted as *Secretary* of the Cuban Junta, and who is now living in New York. The Spanish writer Pezuela praises him for his services to the Metropolis on that occasion, for which he, in fact, obtained a suitable reward from the government. He will now receive one yet more considerable, which he deserves, for having contributed together with others to the failure of the recently projected expedition.

The office of highest importance after that of Governor of a Department, is that of Commander of the *Apostadero* (Naval Station). The person appointed to such a place has also a palace, and many important functions are entrusted to his care. They were formerly very much respected, but now, owing to the almost dictatorial powers of Captain Generals, no satellite can shine by the side of those radiant planets, no matter what degree of brilliancy it may have had before. That marine officer is in many respects under his jurisdiction.

Next comes in importance the office of *Superintendente* (Director of Finances), the business of whom is now transacted by the Captain Generals, having previously been under the charge of the *Intendentes*. The only person who has been able to keep this office for any considerable length of time, was Don Claudio Martinez de Pinillos, who after the lapse of a few years bought for his father the title of Count of Villanueva, knowing that, being his eldest son, he should some day inherit it.

Don Claudio was a Creole : his father was a Spanish shopkeeper, and his mother a native of Cuba, both having been born in a very humble condition. I know the statements of his biographer, and the heraldry bought by Pinillos, assert the contrary ; but notwithstanding them, the facts are notorious.

He was the first who disclosed the secrets of Cuba to

the Metropolis, affording her a good opportunity of increasing the revenues derived from the Island. This gave rise to manifold accusations of bad patriotism with which he has been charged by the Habaneros, and also earned for him all the high rewards and honors which the Court of Madrid so liberally conferred upon him.

Some affirm, and others deny, that he possessed great financial abilities. His general learning was, however, so limited, that having heard, for the first time in the year eighteen hundred and twenty seven, a person speaking of artesian wells, he laughed in his face, and denied the possibility of the water rising from the interior to the earth's surface. His pride was so great that he was unwilling to confess himself inferior to any one in any branch, even in physics, which he had never studied.

He would descend, however, from his haughty position whenever his pecuniary interests required it, and I have been told of an anecdote which is highly characteristic.

The present Count of Santovenia had been abetted by Pinillos during the judicial proceedings which were established against him for having forged, as it is generally believed, the will of an uncle of his. The service, it seems, was very valuable, for as soon as the Count obtained a favorable decision, he sent to Señor Superintendent the voucher of an old credit of many thousand dollars which the deceased Count had against him. The Notary's clerk who placed the deed in the hands of Pinillos, was at first received by him with that insolent haughtiness he was accustomed to use towards all humble persons; but on ascertaining, after a rapid perusal of the document, its nature, he overflowed with an ignoble gladness, and not only invited the clerk to take a seat, but also shook him warmly by the hand, and made several friendly promises.

He then left his desk, sent word to the Notary of his judicature telling him that he was not going to sign any more decrees on that day ; dispatched a message to Santovenia, inviting him to dine, and with the wellcomed document in his hand, ran to his wife's room to give her the happy news.

He is charged with having patronized only those persons who could be useful to him, or those by whom he was flattered, having never rewarded honesty or merit. He appointed to the office of Inspector in the Military Hospital, a Colonel Romay, whose abjectness was almost incredible. He used to play the rôle of a horse to Pinillos' son, taking him upon his shoulders and carrying him through the lobbies before a numerous assemblage of persons, to the great discredit of his age. He was also in the habit of trading publicly with the provisions of the Hospital, depriving the patients of a large part of their allowances. Tacon could not bear the continuation of a crime against the health and even life of the soldiers, and therefore discharged that unworthy officer, in spite of the efforts made by Pinillos to keep him in the place, though well aware of the frauds he committed.

This system gained for him a great number of flatterers, who still praise his memory and respect him, in compensation for undeserved patronage received. Much was said formerly against his honesty, and great riches were ascribed to him, as it was known that he had embarked in several profitable enterprises, though he was always careful of concealing his name. He must have derived immense gains from these speculations, and more particularly from the two following :—the importation of *pesetas sevillanas* (twenty cent pieces coined at Seville), by which he, and a partner named Arrieta, made a nett profit of five thousand dollars monthly ; and the monopoly of

remittances of money to Spain, which yielded far more considerably. His widow, however, seems to be comparatively poor, and one of the explanations offered for this, is that he spent large amounts of money at Madrid, briving Olivan and other members of Congress and Ministers in order to obtain the removal of General Tacon, who had humbled his pride by threatening that he would imprison and send him to Spain.

Christina took great advantage of the propensity of Pinillos to please all persons of high standing. He jealously promoted the interests and scandalous enterprizes which that covetous lady undertook, injuring the treasure of the Nation, and also those of private persons. The salary of the Queen dowager, amounting to thirteen thousand dollars monthly, was paid before any other item by the treasury of Havana, and it is believed that he, after losing all hopes of enjoying any longer the afore-said contract of remitting money to Spain, exerted his influence to secure it to her. Christina was allowed a compensation of eighteen per cent, when in fact, instead of incurring any loss, she gained at least this percentage, and sometimes much more by purchasing bills of exchange on London. Thus Pinillos lost his pittance, and knowing that it could not be avoided, he endeavored to take advantage of the misfortune, yielding with apparent pleasure to what he could not prevent.

The Bishop of Havana and the Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba are the next two highest personages. Both fulfill the same duties, their districts being two dioceses, though I have met with no person who has been able to explain to me why that of Santiago is styled *archbishopric* and not *bishopric*, like that of Havana. Appeals from the decisions of the Bishop are decided by the Archbishop, and viceversa, which will seem to you very singular.

The residents of Havana praise the memory of Don Juan José Diaz de Espada y Landa, one of their former Bishops, who did a vast amount of good to the country, promoting public instruction, relieving needy persons &c. He is sometimes charged by some with not having paid proper attention to the morality of clergymen, and with not having been very austere in his private life. The Santiagueros (inhabitants of Santiago de Cuba) are on the other hand very displeased with their present prelate whom they represent as a fanatic and ignorant friar. He has also his admirers, perhaps among the persons belonging to his party, as he is considered a *red* Spaniard. Both these Priests formerly possessed large incomes; but some years ago the government wrested them from their hands, and now give them a salary.

The present Bishop of Havana, Don Francisco Fleix y Solans, is indebted to Christina for the office he fills, as he was one of the few individuals concerned in her secret marriage with Muñoz, now Duke of Rianzares. He is a good looking, kind and amiable person, and it is perhaps on this account that the friendship of a certain widow lady towards him is wickedly construed. Many accuse him of being a violent politician, who does not forget the claims of his party, even in spiritual concerns; and being a Catalanian, instead of taking proper care of the sheep of his flock, he has sent to Catalonia for several young clergymen among whom he distributes all the ecclesiastical benefits at his command.

There was some years ago a pro tempore Bishop in Havana, called Mendo, who committed a kind of piracy which is worth relating, not only on account of its novelty, but because it affords a new proof of the hopes a people may entertain whenever their officers are not bound by a *common* interest with them. This *respectable* ecclesiastic,

born in Asturias, was in the habit of sending to his country the money left by the dead in order to have a certain number of masses celebrated in favor of their souls ; and as in Havana the price paid for each mass is four times as great as in Spain, it being twenty-five cents in the latter, and one dollar in the former place, the honest and pious Mendo pocketed seventy-five per cent of all the money left for that purpose without damaging the souls of the deceased, because the same number of masses were celebrated, and a help was thus tendered to the poor clergymen of Asturias, though those of Cuba were deprived of the benefit. It is true that the Bishop, not being the heir, had no right to appropriate for himself the balance ; and it is also consistent with the Roman Catholic doctrine, that, had he spent all the money in Asturias, instead of pocketing three quarters of it, the testator's soul would have been benefited. It is, therefore, very likely that in Señor Mendo's opinion, ten masses would produce as much effect in the way of drawing souls out of the Purgatory, as forty.

LETTER XXIII.

Judicial system — Legislative authority — Powerful motives the Judges have for arbitrary judicial despotism — A monstrous mixture of powers — A multiform jurisprudence — Enormous privileges of the Exchequer.

p 12
I SHOULD be obliged to write a large volume, and make many preliminary investigations, in order to convey to you a perfect idea of the judicial system of this Island. I cannot, therefore, give you a full and complete information about it; but you may rely that whatever I may transmit to you will be exact, and I believe, conclusive.

According to the Spanish Constitution now in force, the only legal source of Legislation, is in the united concurrence of the Cortes and the Queen; but as the Cubans are not allowed to send deputies to that Assembly, the wants of the Colony are not ascertained in a legal manner, but only through the interested reports of the employés. *In fact*, the Ministers, at the suggestion of the Captain General, make all the laws, calling them *reales órdenes* (royal orders). This functionary sometimes does not execute the laws that are communicated to him; and even repeals them if he thinks it convenient, enacting simultaneously an ordinance entirely opposed to them, though subject to the approval of the Cabinet, as is stated in a final clause.

This legislative authority has been usurped by the Audiencia also. Under the unpretending title of *Autos acordados* (judicial decrees), that Court has enacted on several occasions some rules of procedure, which are in fact true laws, as they modify, and in many cases abrogate those which had been established, as I could prove with more than one instance. As these Magistrates assume the power of amending and even of abrogating the laws, it must not be expected that they should either respect them, or be careful or cautious in their strict application; and this is less to be expected when we consider that the mode of interpreting is almost arbitrary, for they frequently apply a law in a case which is evidently beyond its literal provisions and in other circumstances they disregard the law that embraces the case in question.

If we also consider that the institution of the Jury is unknown, and that Judges are not required to state the law or royal order on which their decisions are founded, a pretty good idea may be formed of the vast field open for arbitrariness. "The discretion of a Judge," as a distinguished Jurist has said, "is the law of tyrants. It is always unknown; it is different in different men; it depends upon the constitution, temper and passions of the Judge. In the best it is oftentimes caprice; in the worst it is every vice, folly and passion to which human nature is liable."

In my opinion, the judicial despotism in Cuba is by no means less than the political. It is a wonder that a people living under laws which afford no guarantees to property, should entertain such a disposition to acquire it. To any honorable, rightminded Judge, the *moral* responsibility which weighs on him would be a terrible load: I say *moral*, because there is no *legal* one, nor can it exist for a double reason, firstly because the legal grounds for the

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decisions are not stated, and secondly, on account of the numberless contradictions in the several codes and the disorder which prevails in their arrangement. A Spanish clergyman, Martinez Marina, has written a work to show that, in one single code, the most incredible errors exist. That of the Indies is so irregular and incomplete, that it would not be possible to decide the simplest law-suit by it, and there is no exaggeration in stating that not a hundredth part of the laws therein contained are applicable to the Island of Cuba. The government at Madrid has recently appointed a Committee to revise it, instead of forming a new one. Seventeen years ago another Committee was chosen in Havana for the same object, but we have seen nothing done.

The proceedings that ancient laws established to afford facilities to parties to prove their innocence, allowing them time enough to furnish their proofs, have disappeared with a single pen-stroke of the Audiencia. This tribunal has ordered them to be presented in so short a period that the defendant, who is besides imprisoned, is generally prevented from doing it in a proper manner.

I think that any honest person must be very reluctant to accept the office of Judge under a system which requires him openly to violate the laws; and if he should accept it, it would be very difficult to leave the office without having yielded in some way to the inducements offered for abusing his power.

To those acquainted with the doings of the Cuban tribunals, the accounts given of their enormities would not be surprising, but the ignorant will not fail to believe, as I did while in the States, that these reports are exaggerated, and will deny the possibility of such things taking place as they actually do here every day. I will only *relate* to you an occurrence in one of the principal courts.

An offer amounting to a considerable sum, was once made to a Judge, in order to have a suit unjustly decided by him, but he declined it. The party, however, distributed the same amount of money among the several Magistrates of the Superior Court and obtained a reversal of the decision of the Judge. Up to this time, this Judge had never deviated from the paths of virtue, but henceforth he resolved to follow their example, and at length returned to Spain loaded with the spoils of his career. Such was Fernandez Villaverde: he became the worst of Judges, having once been the best.

Thus the Captain General unites in his person the legislative, judicial and executive powers; and the Audiencia the two first named, both being at the same time Judges not only of the right but of the facts also. Did you ever dream that such a government existed in so close a proximity to our shores?

I will notice other remarkable peculiarities. There are on the Island two independent Audiencias; and as both establish rules of their own, they may soon be expected to have two systems of jurisprudence not only different from each other, but also contrary in details and rules, as is already the case in several particulars. This does not, however, seem strange in the Island, as the legal proceedings vary with the *fueros* of the parties, that is, with the privileges enjoyed by the different classes. Those of the Exchequer are most enormous, and one of them is as follows: if a person is a creditor to it for five hundred dollars, and a debtor of six hundred, he cannot deduct that amount from his credit, but has to pay the six hundred dollars, and wait until the government can or will settle the debt.

As the government at Madrid does not inquire into the morality or efficiency of the Candidates for Judgeships in

the Colonies, the persons chosen are commonly corrupt and ignorant. In fact, those who apply for these offices are parties, who by their notorious stupidity have never had a single law-suit entrusted to them, or have not been able to make a living in their own country, and come to Cuba to decide upon the lives and properties of the Creoles. This is very often the case with *alcaldes mayores*, *oidores* and *auditores*; and as all those officers come with the sole view of making a fortune, whatever means present themselves are considered good by them.

I could produce numberless instances of this stupidity and immorality; but one will suffice. One of the Judges in the Audiencia, who was at the same time intrusted with the property of deceased persons leaving an absent heir, went to the house of a Spanish merchant named Cariaga, who had just died. A Notary accompanied him, and also one of his brothers who had no business to perform, as he was not a law-officer; but it had been said that the dead had left a large amount of money in cash and the two wolf-brothers went to share the spoils. They reached the house, asked for the key of the safe and having opened it, began to make heaps of ounces and to count them. The Judge's brother every little while introduced his hand into his pocket feigning to take out a paper-segar, but instead of the pocket becoming lighter it was growing heavier.

One of the persons present who thought himself entitled to a part of the deceased's property, was frightened at such proceedings, and went immediately for his Counsellor. On returning with him, the Judge looked at them both angrily, and ordered everybody out of the room, except his brother and the Notary. To this the lawyer did not dare to reply. A sealed paper was afterwards found, which, by its external appearance seemed to be a will.

This the Judge broke open, not knowing, undoubtedly, the many requisites prescribed by law to perform this operation.

Finally, after having told the Notary to take a memorandum of the money that *they said* was found, he locked up the safe and sent it to his own house. He also put in his pocket all the promissory notes found. This Judge was afterwards tried; but as nobody dared to accuse him, he was duly reinstalled in his office, notwithstanding the notoriety of this enormous transgression.

LETTER XXIV.

Departure from Havana — The sentinel — Coffee-house of Marte y Belona, where Castañeda was shot — The negroes at work — Calabazar — Tavern of No Pedro — A curious breakfast — The Captain de Partido — A bad road.

I BEGIN now, dear Charles, to speak of myself and my short travels through Cuba. You will not expect, I suppose, that I shall enter into any disquisitions on geology, astronomy or botany, as I have already stated that I only intend to communicate to you my own experience, and also what I consider worthy of notice or amusing in regard to the customs, habits and peculiarities of the *Cubanos*.

Don Antonio being as fearful as myself that the *vómito negro* (yellow fever) would attack me, fitted me out as soon as he could, to go into the country. We had to lose one day, however, in obtaining passports. As I had manifested a desire to ride in the volante, instead of going by railroad, in order to have a better opportunity of seeing the country, his son Joseito, the filibuster, came to the hotel before sunrise in the carriage to take me. I was already dressed: I had bought the night before, some colored linen coats and pantaloons, my *jipijapa* or Panama straw hat, and a large bladder for the segars. The

driver tied my trunk and valise behind the volante, and the travelling bag was left inside; he then, hung the machete around his waist, and taking hold of the reins of the three small horses that were attached to the vehicle, he stood by their side until we got in. Joseito then grasped the long reins of the horse on the right side, gave a smart crack with the whip, and we started off at great speed.

The streets were fortunately empty; had they not been so, we should have run over several persons. We only met, at certain distances, with the sleepy *serenos* (watchmen) each with his long lance, pistol, and lantern; and also several *placeros* (marketmen) who were mounted on the croups of their horses, having before them high heaps of vegetables. Some of them were singing at the top of their voices, while others kept up a lively conversation in stentorean tones, but were careful meanwhile to hurry their horses in order to get a good place in the market.

On entering the arch which forms one of the gates of the city, called *Puerta de la Muralla* the sentinel hailed the driver, pointing the end of his bayonet at the horses' breasts. I was afraid that the soldier, who judging from his appearance was very much incensed, would kill the poor animals; but I afterwards learned that he only wished to order—though in a rather energetic manner—the volante to proceed very slowly. I was then told that the *monteros*, who come in with loads of produce, are obliged to alight from their horses, in order to prevent them from running *disrespectfully* before the military authority. We then, entered upon the road called *Calzada del Monte*, among a large number of marketmen, cartmen and muleteers, who were going towards the city, the latter having bells hung to the neck of the hindmost mule.

After a little while, we stopped to take a cup of coffee at the coffee-house of Marte y Belona, which beverage seemed to me very good at that early hour, after which we lighted our segars in a small brazier full of large burning coals in order to enjoy them during the trip.

As this was the place where Castañeda was killed, we inquired for the same waiter who had had charge of the billiard table where he was playing at the time, and who, of course, witnessed the deed. He showed us the spot where he fell, and the blind through which the ball was shot. His statements show that there could scarcely have been nine feet from the barrels of the pistol to the place where Castañeda was. He stood with his back turned to the blind, leaning against the table and holding the cue in his hand. The pistol-shot was heard, the treacherous rogue groaned and fell on the table, and afterwards was dragged by his own weight to the ground. The waiter said that the owner of the establishment had sustained heavy damages on account of the numberless affidavits that had been taken from every waiter, and many other unnecessary annoyances.

We then entered the volante again, and proceeded with greater speed on account of the less crowded state of the road. The ground was muddy, and we were very frequently bespattered by the feet of our own horses, as well as by those passing by our carriage. In a few minutes we took a cross road beginning at a place called Esquina de Teja, half a league from the Palace of the Captain General, and ascended the steep slope of Jesus del Monte, which was enough of itself to tire out the best animals.

Small farms and orchards planted with vegetables were now seen. In one of them we perceived a row of twenty-two negroes with their bodies bent forward, resting with

their left arm on a short stick of wood and having in the right hand a cutlass with which they were cutting the grass. Every little while one of them would raise himself upright showing symptoms of feeling pain in the waist; but he would soon bend his body again, as the negro overseer (*contramayoral*), who provided with a whip, was watching over them without working, shouted from time to time, "Hurry up!"—"Move your hands!" (*Arrea !—Menea las manos !*)

Before arriving at the village of Calabazar, the Captain presented himself, and ordered the carriage to stop in order to examine our passes. He seemed to regret that there was no fault to be found, and that he could not, therefore, exact any fine.

It was about eight o'clock, and as I had manifested a desire to see an inn kept by Catalonians, we stepped into one called "The tavern of Ño Pedro"—this *Ño* being an abbreviation for *Señor*. The horses were sweating profusely and looked rather tired on account of the difficulty of walking with a load of mud sticking to their feet. Joseito ordered the driver to bathe them and give them some corn, and also to rub their hoofs with brandy; meanwhile they provided some breakfast for us.

The tavern consisted of a room thirty or thirty-six feet long, by eighteen or twenty wide, in the fore part of which was the store. The windows were large swinging boards, opening outwards and hung from hinges placed in their upper end. They were kept open by means of long sticks resting against the face of the wall on each side of the window, and holding it raised. Long nails had been driven into the joists of the ceiling, about one foot apart, from which were hanging hams, shoes, baskets, ropes, bunches of onions and garlicks, pack-saddles, panniers, &c. and the walls which had been

whitewashed first, and soiled afterwards by spots of mud, were also ornamented with articles of this description.

In the middle of the room and in the direction of its length, there was a long, narrow pine table surrounded by benches without backs. It was covered with three or four small pieces of cloth placed along it, so full of stains of coffee, wine and different sauces, and covered with such swarms of flies contending for the remains, that no person could decide upon their original color. Our appetite was so great, however, that we ate without hesitation everything they gave us! The breakfast consisted of three fried eggs for each, slices of fried ham, hash, the indispensable boiled rice (*arroz blanco*), coffee and milk, catalonian wine mixed with a large proportion of *aguardiente* and water, and sour bread.

Two cartmen with their clothes stained with mud, were also taking their breakfast by our side and speaking at great length of their recent hardships. Joseito inquired of them the state of the road to the Vuelta de Abajo, and they replied "that even the birds could not pass over it." I apprehended that we should be prevented from proceeding, but my fellow-traveller brought the hyperbole down to its true value. "That means," said he, "that in some places it is rather bad."

Two other guajiros, who had not lain aside their swords, were taking a cup of pure coffee at the other end of the table. They were listening to Ño Pedro's complaints about the behavior of the Captain of the district, who, over and above his monthly illegal instalment, had exacted from him a fine for having once neglected the patrol which it was his duty to attend every third day. This service must be equally divided among all the residents of each village, but those who oil the Cap-

tain's palms are free from this trouble, and as their place is not filled by any hired substitute, and the patrol must be filled up, there are few to bear the load, and hence the abuse of calling for this service too frequently. The Captain alleged as a reason that it was only fair that he should get back the forty ounces (six hundred and eighty dollars) which he had given to the Secretary of the Captain General in order to be appointed to the office.

I heard all this with a great desire for information; Joseito had the patience to explain to me what I could not understand, using other Spanish words to make clear what he considered difficult for me. He also sprinkled his conversation with keen satires on the numberless enormities of the Spanish officers, and on the coarseness of our breakfast. He threw the blame upon me, as I did not wish to go to a good restaurant kept by Italians, which was near by; but I wanted to learn a little about the Catalonians.

My companion did not allow me to pay for our entertainment. He paid one dollar for both, which I considered very cheap. This custom is very general in Cuba. On going to pay at a confectionary or saloon, I have been told more than once by the waiter "It is paid," without knowing who had done the favor, though I presume that some friend wished to surprise me. The guajiros, who were by us, contended for the *pleasure* of paying.

The horses had a rest of over an hour, which they greatly needed, and then we departed. The road, which Joseito did not consider very bad, was almost impassable. Having left the high-road, we met with ditches made by the cart wheels of from twenty to thirty inches deep, into which the horses and wheels fell successively, and sometimes we had to get out of the carriage, plunging into the mud up to the ankle, in order to enable the carriage

to extricate itself. We sometimes went up such steep hills that I thought the carriage must inevitably upset. The negro was all the time angrily scolding and halloing the horses.

At last we arrived at the plantation, having taken thirteen hours to travel fifteen leagues. We had not taken dinner, as all the taverns on the way were kept by Catalonians and we had tried them sufficiently at Ño Pedro's. We were tired, muddy, and hungry. The little horses had accomplished a great feat.

L E T T E R X X V .

Don Antonio's estate — The Creole woman Na Isabel—Blessings—
The nightingale — Division of labor — The orange fields —
Fishing — Don Calixto's plantation — The Patriarch — Ex-
cursion to his plantation — Another tavern — Quarrell — The
Patriarch's estate — School for negro-boys — Negrophilism —
Refaccionistas.

WE got out of the carriage at the door of the dwelling house (*casa de vivienda*). It was locked, but a negro brought the keys shortly afterwards. The steward's wife, Na Isabel, then came in, and directed a negro woman to put the house in order and fix our bedroom. She was a good-looking, stout and very smart young Creole woman of dark complexion and about thirty four or thirty six years old. She embraced Joseito, and said to me: "Good afternoon, gentleman" (*Buenas tardes, caballero*). I answered "Good afternoon" only, and these two words sufficed to let her know that I was a foreigner. Why is it that grown up foreigners who learn the Castilian tongue, the pronunciation of which seems to be so easy, can never acquire it perfectly?

We went into the house, took a quick bath, and changed our clothes. On going out we sat down on the piazza. The bell of the plantation was rung at sun-set

(*oraciones*). We rose from our seats and took off our hats; the negroes who were moving about on all sides stood still until the ringing of the last bell was heard. Joseito, then, put on his hat and bade us good evening (*buenas noches*). The mayoral and all the other employés of the plantation came to see us, and a large circle was soon formed.

We suddenly saw a large number of slaves coming towards the house; they all had their working cutlasses (*machetes de calabozo*), and appeared somewhat as if they were going to kill us. They came, however, to greet their young master, as they would have done their father. Every one of them bent his knee, and with his arms crossed on the breast, and his head uncovered, asked for his master's benediction. This scene, which seemed to be familiar to all those present, affected me. Joseito distributed his benedictions in an affectionate and solemn manner, and looked like the father of the family, though almost all the "sons" were older than he. He also gave them some scraps of tobacco for their pipes and I also divided a few segars and sixpences among some old negroes.

All the workmen then went to proceed with their labors, and we sat down to a delicious supper, ending with a highly flavored cup of coffee, made with pure milk without water. Meanwhile we were amused with the pleasant conversation of Ña Isabel, who inquired for the news of Havana, and related stories about the neighbors. She was unable to read, yet by her conversation any person would have considered her a pretty learned woman. I had occasion afterwards to admire her liberal sentiments.

They had placed two cots in the same room for Joseito and myself, and before nine o'clock we were both

soundly sleeping. The bedding consisted of two linen sheets and a very thin calico spread. At midnight I got up and opened a wooden window: the temperature was delightful, the sky glittering with stars, and a general silence reigned. I was going back to my bed when I heard the voice of a nightingale which had begun to sing so sweetly that I listened to it for a long time with delight, until, apprehending the effects of the night dew, I shut the window and returned to bed remembering that phrase of Bucke which says: "The nightingale sings most sweetly when it sings at night."

I fell sleep again and so remained, until the sound of the bell rung at sunrise (*Ave Maria*) awakened us. After dressing, we went to one of the outbuildings where all the slaves were standing in a circle. The overseer and his negro assistant were in the centre, and *partian la jente*, that is, they formed the different gangs to execute their respective labors. The season of grinding the cane (*la molienda*) was over, and during the dull season, (*tiempo muerto*), as they call it, the labors are reduced to cutting down the weeds (*chapeu*) which grow among the cane and corn, wood-cutting, and preparing the ground for sowing more cane, &c. One of the slaves complained of headache; the steward felt his pulse and ordered him to go to the hospital. He also directed a negress who was far advanced in pregnancy not to go to the field.

Some of the delicious pure coffee was then given to us, and after having lighted our segars, we went out on a morning walk. The ground was moist, and the grass covered with dew, so that our feet soon became wet; but the balmy fragrance from all the plants and especially from the flowers in the garden, which was at the same time an orchard, afforded me a pleasure such as I thought I had never before experienced.

Our attention was then called to the animals. A flock of over two hundred sheep was hurrying out of the fold, bleating; and as many hogs were issuing from the sty, and mingled with the sheep. Two young negroes, about thirteen or fourteen years old, were leading them to graze.

An old negress came afterwards and opened the door of the poultry house from whence over three hundred chickens ran or flew. There were also many horses and mules, but none of them seemed to be any thing extra. The one belonging to the mayoral, which was kept in the rear of his house, was the best cared for on the estate.

On our way back to the house, we entered an orange field, the trees of which were in full bearing, and recalled to my mind what we are told of the garden of the Hesperides. What a beautiful sight! What a delicious smell that of the orange flowers! We climbed one of the trees and with Joseito's knife we cut two handsome bunches which we devoured on the spot. It was not till then that I became aware of the delightful relish of oranges, and it is certainly a good rule to eat each kind of fruit under the tree which produces it. How different are they from those we get at Fulton market!

Our indulgence in these savory fruits did not, however, prevent our doing due honor to a good breakfast of pork, mutton, eggs, bananas, &c. My appetite since we left the capital had become very much better. On seeing the great number of birds passing over our heads I suggested to Joseito a hunting excursion, but he advised me to delay it until late in the afternoon to avoid getting heated. The morning was pleasantly employed in fishing on the border of a rivulet, under the balmy shade of luxuriant trees, and eating different kinds of fruits, brought in a basket by a negro boy.

Such was our daily occupation in the morning during a

week. When the heat was unpleasant we retired to the house and amused ourselves reading *Don Juan de la Cruz's Sainetes*, or *Torres' Dreams*. At night a circle was formed on the piazza, and that was one of the opportunities I had of learning much of what has been communicated to you in my former letters about the rural districts of this Island. I had, however, to correct and modify the statements made by them as many errors and inaccuracies would have been transmitted if I had described things as represented by their great exaggerations.

Some afternoons we visited on horseback the neighboring plantations and thoroughly examined them. The owners of all them were at Havana, except one who had come out for a few days, to order some repairs to be made in his sugar house (*casa de calderas*). We were almost compelled to accept the invitation of Don Calisto (as I will call him) to spend the next day with him. We complied with his request, and there met with another planter who had also been invited and was an old friend of Joseito's family. He was on his way from Havana to his sugar plantation in the Vuelta de Abajo, eight leagues from Don Calisto's estate, where he resided. He was a single man, and lived alone, and my friend called him the *Patriarch*. We all spent the day very pleasantly: Don Calisto was exceedingly attentive to us and among many other delicious things that he offered for our enjoyment, there was a good assortment of choice fruits.

When the Patriarch learned that I was a *Yankee* traveller he invited me to go with him, thus affording me a good opportunity of improving my knowledge of the country. I was obliged to yield to his request notwithstanding the opposition manifested by Joseito, but I was aware that he had some business to transact in Havana, and I availed myself of this occasion to let him go. We

agreed to start the next day, and the Patriarch came that night to our residence accompanied by a negro servant. Both were on horseback, and in the pannier of the negro's horse, his master's valise and a few parcels of articles bought in Havana had been placed. Joseito gave me the best horse he had, and the Patriarch and myself started shortly after sunrise preceded by his slave who guided us through the bad places and showed the best parts of the road.

On the way we had to take our breakfast again in another tavern kept by Catalonians like that of the Calabazar, though rather poorer and, if possible, still more dirty. We witnessed there a warm quarrel between a negro and the innkeeper. As far as we understood, the former had offered an arroba (twenty-five pounds) of brown sugar for sale, and the latter had only given him one *real*, (twelve and a half cents) for it. The negro was uttering high words and greatly insulting him; but the Catalanian, fearing that we should become acquainted with the cause of the quarrel, bore every thing with an astonishing patience and soothed and caressed his provoker, but without showing any disposition to pay him the other real he demanded. Among many insulting and contemptuous words, the negro pronounced in a loud tone of voice and with a marked emphasis the word *Catalan* ! as if he considered that epithet the worst of all possible insults.

Shortly after noon, we arrived at the sugar plantation, and I perceived at once that it was quite different from that of Joseito. Although its owner lived all the time on it, he had entirely disregarded his own comfort. There were no broods of animals whatever, and neither vegetables nor fruits could be found on the estate. His only aim seemed to have been the manufacturing of as much

sugar as could be forced out of his plantation, and he was in the habit of buying everything he needed just as if he was living in the city. There was not a single milch-cow on the estate !

My host is a middle-aged man : he observed a regular methodical life, and performed the business of the steward, doing also with his own hands many carpenter's jobs. This produced small savings, and though it sometimes required hard labor, it afforded him a pastime which to some extent interrupted the weariness of his solitary life.

His principal amusement, however, was the rearing of the young negroes, on whom he bestowed particular care. When he retired to the house at noon, they used to go behind him and form a line where they received instruction during one hour in praying and reading. Some of them were also taught to write. Our Patriarch would have run the risk of having the Lynch-law applied to him in our Southern States. I have not seen, nor do I know of any similiar practice being followed anywhere else in the Island, and I suspect that the motive of that gentleman for proceeding thus was the remorse he experienced for holding slaves. He was always endeavoring to diminish the labors of his negroes, and he hopes that he will shortly be able to suppress the night work entirely, without any decrease in the quantity of sugar manufactured ; a problem which in my opinion is very difficult.

The average crop of the plantation amount to fifteen hundred boxes of sugar, twenty thousand dollars worth, and though the expenses of production are about ten thousand dollars only, the debt of the plantation is always increasing in spite of his strict economy. The mystery was in the *Refaccionista*, a name given to the person who supplies the plantations with all the articles wanted, and afterwards sells the produce on commission. He charged

to the owner's account all real expenses, and others, perhaps, which were never incurred, interest, commissions, and probably higher prices for the goods than they were really worth. The final result was that the balance in favor of the refaccionista was greater every year, and, therefore, a capital of two hundred thousand dollars did not yield any profit, but on the contrary, was always decreasing.

The Patriarch, I believe, did not understand this phenomenon, though I proved to him in an evident manner that by selling his one hundred negroes for half-price, giving away his land for nothing and investing his capital in any other enterprize, he could derive a handsome income of which he was then deprived. It is possible he did not want to lose the reputation of being a wealthy man, or to descend from the rank of a planter. The refaccionista, meanwhile, is becoming rich on the fruits of his vanity. I presume this is the case with many other planters.

LETTER XXVI.

A wedding among slaves — Huts — Drum-ball — Captains of the district — Vexations on poor farmers — Insolent abuses of soldiers — Despotism and Liberty.

THE day after our arrival was Sunday. At nine o'clock all the labors were suspended, and half an hour afterwards we saw several negroes and negresses neatly dressed with clean clothing, coming to the house. They were a young couple who, together with their groomsman and bridesmaid, were going to the village to get married. Their master gave them a ticket for the Curate of the church, and they then mounted on two mares. The bridegroom was going on the same animal with his bride, who was seated before him. He held her by his left arm round her waist while the reins were in his right hand.

This marriage had been suggested by the Patriarch. The negro had acquired the bad habit of running away very frequently, and his master, in order to steady him on the estate, made him a present of a pig, and found a bride for him. She at first refused to accept the proposition, on the ground of his bad behavior; but he made a solemn promise that he would not run away any more, and that he would build his hut and devote himself in his leisure hours to the cultivation of the parcel of land (*conu-*

co) which his master would allow him. The *lady* then agreed to it, and since that moment her future half, changed his conduct. He, then, began to dig the holes for the piles of his house, and cut down in the woods the necessary timber. His friend Nepomuceno, who was the most skilful hand on the plantation,—though he had a vice for each of his good qualities—superintended the work, which was finished during my stay there, in about three months after its commencement. The master, then, examined it, and having found every thing right, presented him with a wooden key for the door, made by himself, and gave him leave to marry. These huts did not cost any thing to the slaves, except the labor invested in them, because all the materials could be found on the plantation, for even the roof was formed with the leaves of the palm tree (*guano*).

Each family have a house to themselves, as the Patriarch had not been willing to follow the fashion of building *barracones*. This name is given to a large and strong building where all the negroes are locked up during the night on many plantations, and hence, they, oftentimes, instead of sleeping mounted their mares and went to the estates in the vicinity. The owner was as well aware of this as of various depredations committed on his sugar; but he suffered it because he wished to afford them all possible freedom.

In order to entertain the newly married couple, who soon returned from church, there was in the afternoon a drum ball (*tambor*). All the negroes, dressed in their best, stood forming a circle. The instruments used by the band consisted of two drums made with a piece of the hollow trunk of the palm, covered on one end with a piece of hide, and several couples danced twisting themselves in an extraordinary manner. After the lapse of one

hour, the ball ended and a small glass of aguardiente was handed to each slave. They afterwards, changed their clothes and at sunset began to cut grass for the horses, and do other jobs. The morning had been spent by some in working on their conucos, and by others in sleeping in their huts.

My new friend seemed very happy in his solitary life, and did all in his power to please and entertain me. He is an exceedingly amiable person, of excellent temper, good humored, very obliging and indulgent to the faults of others, as will very easily be seen from what I am going to relate.

The Captain of the district was in the habit of going to the plantation and staying there for several weeks, without having been invited, on the ground of his authority. He was a newly arrived Spaniard, of the worst education and coarsest manners. He appropriated to himself every thing good he met with; criticised every thing, even the quality of the meals; gave orders to the servants in a haughty tone of voice, using also indecent expressions; even rudely demanded the Patriarch's razors to shave himself, as he stood in need of the most indispensable articles. The proprietor suffered these annoyances patiently and was satisfied with saying, "Poor fellow, he is a beast." He also feared to displease him and expose himself to the consequences of his enmity.

One day he captured a soldier who had deserted his banners, and went to the plantation accompanied by his lieutenant and the prisoner, who being tightly tied could scarcely move. "Host," said he without any other salutation, "I want two white men to scort this rascal, as I do not wish to proceed any farther." The place where the soldier was to be carried was nine miles from the estate. "The muleteer is out," replied the Patriarch, "and the

overseer cannot leave the slaves alone." The Spaniard then looked at me; he undoubtedly intended to make me a bailiff of his government! But my countenance was grave, and he did not look in that direction again.

A poor old man, owner of a small farm, was ploughing not far from the house where we were. "Host," said the Captain, "send a negro to tell that man to come here quickly." The slave departed, and soon returned accompanied by the farmer who had to abandon the furrowing of his land.

"Hear!" said the Spaniard in a highly contemptuous manner, "take this man to the Captain of * * * district, and hand him this paper. Be careful, for if he escapes I will keep you a fortnight in the stocks, and afterwards send you prisoner to Havana."

Neither requests nor arguments influenced his decision. The old farmer alleged in vain the damages he was going to sustain, losing a whole day's work and leaving his family alone. There was no alternative . . . The poor man had to obey, and I wondered at such flagrant despotism.

Two days afterwards another scene similar to this took place. A company of twenty mounted horsemen, headed by their officer, made their appearance on the estate. They asked for food for themselves and their horses, requiring it to be furnished *quickly*. Ten or twelve slaves were taken from their labor and set to cutting grass, &c. They consumed all the meat and vegetables that were in the pantry, and the officer required to have his table properly set and abundantly provided. They stayed two hours, and neither paid for what they consumed, nor even thanked the proprietor for his trouble.

Many other curious things occurred which I do not relate, but this may be sufficient to give you an idea of

what the inhabitants of a country ruled by an absolute government have to suffer . . . Oh Charles ! Let us all die a hundred times rather than be deprived of Liberty ! Let us thank God for that immense benefit conferred on us, and pray Him never to withdraw from us such an unvaluable blessing.

I had not spoken to the Patriarch about politics before, and did it now for the first time. Poor fellow . . . He was aware of the unhappiness of his condition and had become almost satisfied with it : man becomes accustomed to slavery. He spoke in a low tone of voice when alluding to the government ; he feared that there might be some hidden spy hearing his words, and did not consider himself entitled even to the right of complaining.

LETTER XXVII.

Improvement in the speaking of Spanish—The water-carrier negro—
Resignation of slaves — The blind negro and his chickens —
The *fututo* — Assault by the residents of the *palenque* — Feat
accomplished by the dogs — Cruelty of the Captain — An
American Engineer.

I HAD one day the pleasure of ascertaining that I had made some progress in my Spanish. I talked for a long while to the water-carrier of the Patriarch, and understood every thing he said, though he was not a Creole.

The business of this slave was to bring from the river all the water that was needed. He brought it in four barrels, which he placed on the back of a mule. As the animal walked slowly, the negro had to go over the way a less number of times in the day than if he had gone quickly ; it would not do, however, to go too leisurely, because he was required to have always a good supply.

I was once on the border of the river when he came down, and asked him whether he did feel tired of such a tedious life or not. He replied that he was not, because he had food enough to eat, and tobacco for his pipe, and once in a while he could take a draught of aguardiente. His master, he said, was very good ; he gave him clothing, and never punished him ; only a certain overseer,

whom he considered very wicked, and who had been in the plantation several years before, had once unjustly flogged him. In answer to several other questions that I put to him, he said that he only wished to be free in case his master would allow him to live in his hut, and give him his daily allowance ; but preferred to be a slave if he was obliged to earn a livelihood, as then the robbers would deprive him of his savings, and the *justicia* (Judges) would persecute him in order to exact money from him. He also thought that when sick, he would not find a hospital to go to.

The simple thoughts of this negro recalled to my mind the condition of some of our own destitute countrymen, and I parted from him in gloom, looking upon him as a comparatively happy being, who knew nothing of the higher pleasures of life, and was satisfied with his fate, and his most indispensable wants being supplied.

I had another conversation with the negro who opened and shut the gate of the pasture ground when any person required it. He was very old, entirely blind, and could do nothing else. One afternoon I went hunting with my host's gun, which, although it was a very poor one, would kill great many birds on account of their abundance ; indeed their number was so great that I once killed eleven parrots with a single shot.

I passed by the gate-keeper's hut and asked him for something to light my segar. I also inquired after his health, and he answered : "Anacleto is putting an end to my life." I did not understand him at first, but after many long and difficult explanations, I learned that a negro of the plantation called Anacleto, who had run away, was in the habit of stealing the chickens he raised. He seemed to consider that property as his own life, and the decrease of the former as the extinguishment of the latter.

I gave him half of the contents of my hunting bag, but he did not seem to be satisfied, as he preferred chickens in order to sell them to his master.

As it was the custom of the Patriarch to get up in the morning before sunrise, and we had no circle or visits in the evening, we usually went to bed at eight o'clock. One night I awoke and heard a very strange noise at a great distance which I afterwards learned was produced by a large shell of a snail called *fututo* or *fotuto*, used as a horn by farmers who have no bells. Several hard knocks at our door were then heard, and we were called upon to rise immediately. We inquired and learned that our visitor was one of the *guardieros*, or negro-watchmen, who take care of the plantation during the night; and that he had come to inform us that they were blowing the fututo at the *vega* (tobacco field) of Ño Francisco.

This was a sign that the farmer was in need of help. After dressing and providing ourselves with arms, we started in haste accompanied by the overseer, the muleteer and two or three slaves armed with cutlasses, and two dogs, towards the farm. At a distance from it, we distinctly heard a great uproar among the animals on the farm: our dogs could no longer be restrained; they broke loose and rushed towards a small cottage, and almost at the same time we heard a great noise caused by people who were running away.

When we arrived, we saw each dog holding a negro on the ground, and so fastened to him, that it was with difficulty that we could get them off. On entering the house, we found the farmer lying on the floor of the hall with his hands and feet tightly tied. His wife and daughter had locked themselves up in a small room, and one of them was still blowing the fututo, not knowing that we, *their liberators*, had arrived.

They had been assaulted by the runaway negroes of the palenque in the mountains of Cuzco. The robbers had carried off some chickens with them, but we did not allow them time enough to take the pigs also. The prisoners were dangerously wounded; nevertheless they were taken to the plantation, and having been securely lodged in the hospital, their wounds were skilfully and dexterously dressed by the Patriarch. They both belonged to estates in the vicinity, and one of them had been away for over ten years.

The Captain came for them the next day, and in spite of the suggestions made to him of the danger of their having the lock-jaw or spasm if they went out of the hospital, he took them at once to their respective masters, in order to collect from them, before the slaves should die the fee for having captured them. He seemed not to be satisfied with taking for himself what really belonged to the Patriarch, and dwelt upon the small number of prisoners we had got, as his fees (*captura*) would otherwise have been much larger.

On the same day I had the pleasure of seeing a country-man, a true Yankee, arriving on the estate. Mr. * is a native of Concord, New Hampshire, and is the Engineer of my host, who pays him a salary of one hundred dollars per month all the time that the grinding season lasts, and gives him also excellent accommodations, and as good treatment as he himself receives, during the time that he wishes to stay on the plantation. He goes home every year to see his wife, and though he might remain six months with her, commonly returns at the end of three. He seems to prefer the warm climate of Cuba to the rather severe cold of his native State.

His surprise was great in meeting with another American, and you may easily conceive the pleasure it afford-

ed me. I had not spoken a single word in English for the last twenty days, and when I commenced, I felt a slight difficulty in the first phrases; but still all my thoughts are in my native tongue, and when I make any calculation in Spanish, I do not become satisfied unless I rectify it in English.

LETTER XXVIII.

Excursion to the Vuelta de Abajo — Keepers of the large breeding farms, (*hateros*)—Their assistants for the grazing of the cattle on the plains, (*Sabaneros* and *Peones*) — Customs — Tobacco fields — Tricks of the tobacco planters — The farmer of Las Pozas — Anecdotes about Enna's troops — Interview with Narciso Lopez — *Cordillera de los Organos* — San Diego Springs — The duck-race.

My excellent friend the Patriarch, carried his amiable attentions towards me so far as to undertake a rather long journey to afford me an opportunity of seeing the field of Las Pozas, and at the same time the breeding farms and tobacco plantations. I had evinced a desire to see with my own eyes what had been described to me, and he was so kind as to abandon his quiet life and the care of his property in order to comply with my wishes.

We started on our great expedition accompanied by the same negro who had come with us from Don Antonio's plantation, and as we afterwards concluded to proceed to the *Baños de San Diego* (San Diego watering place), our trip lasted longer than we at first anticipated. I had the opportunity, however, of seeing many new and curious things, and had it not been for this excursion, my opinions on several subjects would have been quite different from what they are.

The customs of La Vuelta de Abajo are more rustic, if I may be allowed to use that term, than those of the other districts of the Island which I had seen. The *guajiros* wear shoes made of hog's skin, from which they are called by the name of *berraco*, and which do not resemble at all that useful article. They are commonly used by the *hateros*, (improperly pronounced by them *jatéros*), *sabaneros* and *peones*, whose chief business is to ride over the estates and see if there are any animals wounded or caught in the thickets of the woods. They ride on horseback without saddles, and handle the *lazo* rather dexterously to catch bulls and cows. I have seen them taking their dinner; they had a plenty of meats and vegetables, and also of brown sugar, which they ate with wooden spoons, out of large dishes made of the same material. These men earn very small wages.

These estates contained nothing worth seeing in-as-much as there was not even a house upon them, unless a few huts might be so styled. We, therefore, stopped at one of them, only at the repeated invitation and request of the lessee. While there, I was passing along near a litter of young pigs, and seeing them alone, I picked one of them up and walked away; but he began to squeal, and the sow rushed towards me enraged and bristling. I ran with the pig in my hands; but seeing that she was gaining upon me, I dropped it on the ground, and she then stopped her pursuit. Wild hogs are very ferocious, and sometimes attack people; wild dogs are also very mischievous.

In the tobacco-fields they were doing the *escojida*, that is, the picking out and assorting the leaves. In almost every instance the produce was already sold to speculators in Havana, who are in the habit of advancing the *price*, and when the crops come in they go to witness the

making up of the bales (*enterciado*) in order to prevent their being sold to others or changed for articles of an inferior quality, to prevent which, great care is necessary. One of the planters was so frank that he explained to us the tricks he generally used in order to cheat the purchasers, and also related an occurrence in which he had run the risk of being stabbed, as he perhaps deserved.

It is needless to say that we smoke quite a large number of the segars called *vegueros*. They are sometimes made by the women, who roll them up in their hands, and that is the cause why they are not so smooth and well finished as those made on tables. We were everywhere presented with them in so liberal a manner that the load of our servant was greatly increased.

Our pilgrimage over the mountains of Cuzco was rather toilsome, for though the ground was dry and hard, the slopes were steep and dangerous. Six miles before reaching the field of Las Pozas, we entered on a farm whose proprietor seemed to be well posted up in the events that had taken place in that neighborhood. He was a man of about seventy years of age, but strong, pleasant and obliging. His wife, who was only fifty years old, his single daughter and a negress, their servant, were all the inmates of the house.

We inquired whether he could sell us some thing for breakfast or not, and he replied that he would give us gratis, and with the greatest pleasure of every thing he had, "because" said he, "my house, though miserable, is not an inn." His wife and daughter then began to move about in order to present us with the best they had, while the good old man entertained us with his pleasant conversation . . . How do I regret that I cannot mention the names of persons to whom I am indebted !

He described some interesting events and related many

annoyances and bold depredations committed on him by the Spanish soldiers, while the *Yankees*, as he called the recent invaders, had not caused him the least trouble or damage.

On learning the news of the landing of Lopez, he was advised by the Captain of the district "to escape and carry with him as much of his property as he could, as well as his whole family, to avoid being murdered and pillaged by the *pirates*;" but instead of following this advice, he mounted his horse, and secretly went to meet the General to inquire from him whether it would be wiser to take his family far from the place, or whether they could consider themselves safe staying on the farm.

He met the General, who was outside the village, accompanied by several officers, sitting down on some large stones. He did not need to inquire which among those gentlemen was the Chief: fame had taken care to make his portrait widely known, and it was a notorious fact that his long white beard hung down to the middle of his breast.

The gallant soldier rose, and in a friendly and amiable manner tendered his hand to the farmer. He then took him apart, and on ascertaining the object of his visit, he said that he could answer for his own proceedings, but was unable to do the same for those of others, who were with him; but, above all, that the Spanish troops would shortly arrive, and that he ought to fear them more than the invaders. "Prophetical words!," said the old man, while the tears started from his eyes.

Lopez requested him to join the army after having taken his family to a safe place. He promised to do so, because despite his age, he considered himself bound by duty to do it; but when his family were safely removed, and he went back to his farm, the expedition had been

disbanded, and it would have been foolishness to want only sacrifice himself. The only good he could do was to hide two wounded Cubans whom he succeeded in saving notwithstanding the great number of soldiers who passed through his estate. He had the pleasure of learning, through a reliable gentleman of Havana, their safe arrival at New Orleans, on board an American steamer, just one month after their departure from his house.

All the animals he had on the farm were devoured by the soldiers under the command of Enna, and even a milch-cow, which was too poor to afford any meat, was slain in spite of his remonstrances. Afterwards, when General Concha went to examine the ground and distribute money to those who had suffered damage, it is said that several persons obtained some, because they affirmed that the damage was done by the pirates, but those who spoke the truth could not get any. Many who had not suffered in the least, obtained considerable sums. The object was, probably, to admonish the inhabitants of what they have to fear from future invasions.

One day a few officers and soldiers arrived on our host's farm, and the first named compelled the poor man to wait upon the table where they were taking their dinner. They were also, all the while, laughing at his manner of speaking, mocking the customs and movements of the old man, boasting, and speaking of Creoles and Yankees in the most contemptuous language. When their amusement had attained its highest pitch, and they were devouring every thing and breaking plates, tumblers and dishes on purpose, the report of two or three guns fired near by was heard. They all left the table at once, and rushing out of the house terrified, ran in disorder towards the road. One of the officers forgot to take his sword which he had left in a corner of the room, and our host

taking it quickly threw it after him, bursting at the same time into loud laughter. "Surely," said he to us, "half a dozen men might have taken prisoners those same heroes who were boasting so much a few moments before."

We learned several other feats of this description performed by the sons of Pelayo and the Cid; and were I to relate them, the renown which they arrogate to themselves of being a courageous people, would be considerably diminished. Owing to my silence, a better opportunity is afforded them of denying the facts, and affirming that every thing I write to you is falsehood on the part of the farmer, and *jealousy (envidia)* on the part of the Yankee. I would only ask those valiant troops how was it that the greatest number of their wounded received the balls in the soles of their feet?

At last, we arrived at the field of Las Pozas where a glorious monument will be erected, perhaps at not distant day, in memory of ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT EXPLOITS OF MODERN TIMES, as that great feat has been properly named. There we beheld the camp where a handful of generous and gallant heroes, Americans and Cubans, fought and defeated and put to flight an enemy ten times stronger. Every one of the stones of that locality is historical; I stood on them with great satisfaction, but I have not seen the spot where Enna received that well directed blow which so terrified the Spanish governors of Cuba.

The Catalonian who kept the inn in which we took our dinner that day, did not entertain the unfavorable opinion of his countrymen in Havana, in regard to the followers of Lopez, so atrociously slandered by them. He praised the conduct of the invaders; he spoke with admiration of their courage, and with impartiality of the fears with which they inspired to the Royalists. Thus

it is that truly vaillant men conquer the sympathies even of their most fanatical adversaries !

We heard from the mouth of this Catalanian several statements, which, if true, would prove the infamy and cowardice of the Spanish officer who first took charge of Lopez when he was made a prisoner. The Spaniard found him exhausted by hunger and weariness, and scarcely able to walk ; he had no shoes, and his feet were bloody and lacerated. He caused him to be tightly tied ; his elbows were almost joined at his back ; a rope was then placed around his neck, and then the wretched officer attained the climax of his cowardice performing the vilest act a man can commit : he put his infamous hand on the face of the hero !

The Patriarch wanted to go from Bahia Honda to San Diego Springs to have the pleasure of crossing over the chain of mountains called Cordillera de los Organos, hoping to be able to show me the two seas on the north and south side of the Island ; but in this we were disappointed owing to the height of the trees which intercepted our sight. We were obliged to take a guide with us, and notwithstanding his services and his assurances that the route was suitable for horse travel, we were more than once on the point of falling down the deep ravines. Though what we really found was not quite all we had anticipated, yet, we saw much splendid scenery and many sublime and frightful precipices. Nevertheless, I had no confidence in the feet of my horse ; I did not, therefore, feel safe when mounted, and when I walked, I feared that he would slip and fall upon me. Altogether, I must confess that such long and toilsome tour gave me but little pleasure.

I was greatly surprised on arriving at the village of San Diego, as instead of finding as I had expected, good

and comfortable houses, we only saw many miserable cottages and huts. There were very few persons in the street, and it had the aspect of a deserted place. Invalids resort to those Springs in summer only, as we do to those of Saratoga, because as soon as the rainy season sets in, the waters of some of them, and more especially of those called *Tigre* and *Templado*, become very weak. Some return to their homes cured, some as sick as they were before, and some even worse, as is unfortunately the case with all remedies; many go away with their pockets full, and many others, not only have them emptied, but leave many accounts standing which they have to settle afterwards.

Many wonderful cures are, of course, always related as being effected by the waters of the springs. Two or three marriages were arranged there during the last season, and it is not impossible that these waters may have the property of promoting them. Should such power be discovered and made known, the village will be exceedingly crowded in succeeding seasons.

On our return we passed through the village of Los Palacios, though I did not see any palaces there; but we had an opportunity to witness a duck race (*corrida de patos*). I can hardly write a description of it, because the amusement was so cruel that I was greatly shocked. An old duck is hung with the head downwards, from a strong branch of a tree, at such a height that a man mounted on his horse and riding at full speed under it, may catch hold of the neck and pull the head off. In order to make this task more difficult, the neck is covered with tallow, causing the hand to slip, and thus the sufferings of the poor animal are protracted.

Over thirty mounted guajiros are seen stationed at a given point, from which they start successively and try

their strength on the bird. We left before the victory had been won. All the inhabitants of Los Palacios, I believe, and many of the residents of the neighborhood, were present, and also the Captain of the district who authorized that *innocent* pastime. I mentioned this fact to the Patriarch, and he answered: "The government likes every thing which in any way contributes to brutalize the people."

LETTER XXIX.

Return to Don Antonio's estate — Trip in a cart drawn by oxen —
Cold bath in November — Ball with the *tiple* (small guitar) —
Love in country people — A good law among many bad
ones — Don Mateo Pedroso and Doña Mariana Barreto —
Exaggerated wealth.

Two days after our return to the Patriarch's plantation, Joseito came and told me that he had company at the estate; and that it was necessary that I should go to do them the due honors. It consisted of all the members of his family, except his father who remained in Havana. They use to spend a few weeks in the country at a certain season of the year, and although this time had not arrived yet, they came to stay with me for a week while I was becoming accustomed to the climate.

I had to bid adieu to the Patriarch, which I did with regret; for I had formed a strong attachement for him, and I believe that he, in turn, entertained the same sentiment towards me, notwithstanding the saying "that persons who have reached a certain age do not easily acquire new friends." He, therefore, extorted from me a promise to come again with Joseito and stay another season with him; and the Engineer gave me his address and requested me to visit his family on my return to the States.

Very early in the morning of the next day, the Filibuster and myself started at a good round pace, and as the roads were dry, we reached our destination about three hours afterwards, before breakfast time, having stopped on the way only once to drink a cup of bad coffee and milk in the same inn kept by the Catalonian of whom I have spoken to you before.

All the family were on the piazza waiting for us. They accosted me with hundreds of questions about my tour through the Vuelta de Abajo, and the eldest daughter (whom I will call hereafter Emily) called me to account, and affirmed, with a well feigned air of sincerity, that she had received reliable information that I had fallen in love with a country girl whose father used to wear *kog-shoes*. They regreted that I had not taken with me one of those shoes in order to send it to Barnum's museum. Wishing to punish them for their mockery of the Vuelta de Abajo, I replied that what I was going to send to New York as a curiosity was one of the heavy wheel-barrows (*carretilla*) that are commonly met with in Havana.

The girls and boys began to discuss the best manner of arranging our excursions and amusements, and thought of beginning by a ride to the villages and plantations in the vicinity ; but the old lady said that Joseito and myself had already travelled eight leagues that day, and that for this reason nobody ought to go beyond the bounds of the plantation.

At about noon I was somewhat surprised at seeing the Filibuster coming to the house on a cart drawn by two teams of oxen, and covered on the sides and upper part with green leaves of the palm tree. He stood on the fore part of the vehicle, and had in one hand a long pole and in the other the two reins of the nearer team, which were two ropes tied to the animals' nostrils (*narigones*). A

young negro walked ahead of the farther team, and by means of ropes led the oxen in the desired direction.

In order to give me a surprise, they had not acquainted me with the purpose of the cart, which was to take all the family to the bath, including Ña Isabel and the wife and daughter of the new overseer, for during my absence the other had been discharged for having punished one of the slaves too severely. We all got into the cart; the ladies sat down in the fore part on their own limbs, after the Turkish fashion, and we took possession of the rear and sat with our feet touching the opposite side. Two young negresses carrying the ladies' clothes, were also in the vehicle.

Amidst much laughing, singing and criticizing the want of skill of the driver, who bore the slander patiently, we proceed to the place in the river where we used to fish before, and on arriving, I was surprised again on seeing in the middle of the stream a well built house on piles and covered with palm leaves, which formed the ladies' bath.

The spot was delightful, and we soon found another for ourselves above that place in a natural recess formed by the stream, where we could not be seen by the people in the bathing house. The trees were so luxuriant and the foliage so thick, that they leaned to the opposite border and formed an arch over the water impassable by the sun's rays. This produced an imposing darkness accompanied by a deep silence only interrupted by the singing of the birds and the purling of the stream.

You will, perhaps, consider it any thing but agreeable to take a cold bath in the month of November; but the weather required it. The thermometer stood in my opinion at seventy-five or eighty degrees. We all liked the sport, and our appetite decidedly improved, as was con-

clusively proved by the large quantity of fruits consumed after our return to the house, and the honors rendered to the dinner which was served two hours afterwards.

We undertook a ball in the evening, but neither the boys nor I were good musicians, and the young ladies had no piano to play. There was also too small a number of men to form a regular dance; but though the obstacles were great, "Omnia vincit amor," and the driver of the carriage (*calesero*) was called in, and with a small guitar, called *tiple*, played a waltz very skilfully.

I began to dance, but the Señora advised me to stop, as the agitation might produce some mischief.

I also heard some stanzas sung by Ña Isabel aided by some of the young ladies. The subject was sentimental, and the music, as I understood, a succession rather too violent of grave and acute tones and viceversa. In the song a young farmer complained, not on account of any misconduct of his lady love, who was faithful to him, but of his poverty, which had caused an order of her parents forbidding her all further acquaintance with the poet. He used to go every evening before her house to weep over his misfortune, and relate to her the thoughts he had had during the day, and the plans he had formed in order to obtain the sordid metal, the want of which produced their common unhappiness.

The facts which formed the subject of the poem were true, and Ña Isabel was acquainted with the suffering author. He was the son of a poor farmer who for several years had employed the father of the young lady as a laborer, and she was born in his own house. When he obtained some money, he began business himself by going to Matanzas every day with two horses loaded with sugar-canes, which he sold in the streets. After the lapse of a few years he had amassed a tolerably large capital,

which he invested in a tract of land devoted then to pasturage, and which he afterwards improved and made a sugar plantation of it. The former employer not being so successful, remained in the same condition; and the laborer, who had reached a high rank in society became so haughty that he refused to have the son for husband of his daughter. The young lady, however, paid more attention to the voice of her heart than to her father's, and having respectfully asked him the cause of his denial, he replied that the poverty of the man was the only objection he had. She, then, resolutely answered, that if that was the only cause, she would gladly submit herself to it, but the father, not wishing to change his resolution, took advantage of a favorable opportunity to attain his desired end.

A Spanish Colonel recently arrived from the Peninsula, learned the circumstances of the case, and knowing that the girl's father was wealthy, did not hesitate in soliciting her hand, it being for him a matter of little consequence to obtain her heart. The father welcomed him to his house; but the young lady, on learning his purpose, refused even to see him. She also informed her suitor of what was taking place, and he, aided by his friends, obtained from the authorities the leave for the marriage, notwithstanding the opposition of the stubborn father.

You will undoubtedly be surprised on learning that the father was compelled to allow his daughter a monthly amount in proportion to his wealth. Such would not have been the case in our country; and in my humble opinion, this law is better than ours. Among so many bad laws, there should have been at least one good.

This history brought forth another which was related to us by the old lady, and which proves how far the government of this Island has intruded in the most in-

imate business of the household. Don Mateo Pedroso, then the wealthiest man of the Island, succeeded in marrying Doña Mariana Barreto in the latter part of the last age. She did not accept the proposal very willingly, not only because the man was considered of a rank inferior to hers, but also on account of his reputation of being very niggardly. Her relations, however, exerted their influence on account of the man's riches, and the marriage was effected. Several stories were related to prove his stinginess, and it was said that he once travelled six miles, in order to recover an old piece of copper that had fallen from his sword in a country inn, where he had stopped.

Another objection with the lady was, that he was in the habit of wearing hog-shoes while on his estate, and also that he wore a *coleta* or queue, but these small inconveniencies were speedily removed by a promise he made of wearing good shoes thenceforth while in the country, and also of cutting off his *coleta*. The lady was, therefore, rather capricious; but what the husband considered worst of all, was her being as fond of that profuseness and pomp to which she had been accustomed since early childhood, as he was of the most rigid economy. Being liberal and charitable towards the poor, she was not allowed to indulge her inclination, and these differences of opinion gave rise to several disagreements between them.

The lady said once that she needed a new set of chairs for the parlor, as those she had were too old. It must here be remarked that the custom in Havana is to place the chairs as closely together as they can possibly be, filling every available space all around the wall, and that the size of the parlor required about three dozens.

Don Mateo very reluctantly went out, and bought the

article, but it was not of the first quality. The lady, then became indignant at the conduct of her husband, and ordered a servant to bring an axe, and have all the chairs split to pieces before her, which was duly accomplished. On another occasion she bought a dress for three hundred dollars to go to a ball, and a drop of melted wax accidentally fell on it. This mishap was related to Don Mateo, but he told her that the stain could be effectually removed, and besides, that nobody would pay any attention to so small a matter. She, then, called him stingy, (*cicatero*), and taking the scissors cut it all to pieces.

Finally, seeing that less wealthy persons used to have a better table than hers, Doña Mariana made a complaint to the Captain General, who summoned the husband, and having ascertained that his yearly income amounted to eighty thousand dollars, designated the number and quality of the dishes which he should thenceforth put on his table for breakfast, dinner and supper.

This anecdote acquaints us with a fact which openly contradicts what you and I have read in a well known book, whose author is considered there as well informed on these matters. You see what was the yearly income of the richest man of the Island sixty years ago, and though there are now larger capitals, only few persons have such an income, and there is neither merchant nor planter possessing over four millions capital. It is, therefore, an error to believe that some persons in Cuba are worth eight millions, as is stated in said book. Should the friend who has promised to furnish me with some interesting data keep his word, I shall speak to you hereafter at some length about this matter.

LETTER XXX.

Excursion through the fields in the vicinity of Don Antonio's plantation — Cock-pit — The ball *zapateo* — Its probable origin — Breaking of a ball — Mercenary murders — Forswearing not punished.

ON THE afternoon of the following day all the young folks and myself went on horseback on an excursion through the plantations in the vicinity. The two girls rode on two small mares, with pack-saddles made of straw (*aparejo*), over which a *seron* (pannier) had been secured, in which they placed their feet well wrapped in the lower part of their dresses. They could thus make use of short or common dresses, but I was not able to understand how they could disengage their feet in case of the falling of the animal.

The three beasts destined for us had the saddles used by the country people, and as they are not commonly provided with stirrups, it is difficult, for those who are not accustomed to ride on them, to keep their equilibrium. The horses belonged to the class called *de paso* (pacing), whose movement is so easy and gentle, that while the animal is not tired, the rider does not rise from the saddle; and their velocity is as great as that of the swiftest trotting horses.


The chief object of the excursion being the ride, we passed over several estates, but did not alight on any of them though warmly invited to do so. We were told that there was going to be a ball in the village the next day, and we returned determined to be present if the assent of the old lady could be obtained.

After our return to the plantation the circumstances were stated to her, and her consent was asked, but there were strong motives for withholding it, as will be afterwards explained, and the head of the family being also absent, the wife did not wish to go without him. The request of the girls and boys were, however, so urgent that she at last granted them leave to go, on condition that the three ladies should go in the carriage and the gentlemen well armed would keep them company on horseback.

Joseito invited me to go after breakfast to witness the cock-fights, which I, in order to satisfy my curiosity, accepted, and though the amusement is cruel, I did not regret to have seen a spectacle that I had not anticipated. The arena of the combat was a circle of twelve or fifteen feet in diameter surrounded with a fence two or three feet high, behind which were the seats for the spectators.

I was particularly struck on seeing people of all shades, white, black and more or less dark, indiscriminately mixed; they all had their hats on, and were greatly excited in prospect of the fight; loud howls were heard on all sides accompanied by shouts, some of which were any thing but edifying. The pit and the whole company seemed to be rather *too democratic*, as, I believe, everybody commanded, and no one obeyed.

Two men were in the pit with the animals; they were the *galleros*, or persons to whom the owners of the cocks entrust the care of their champions while fighting. They sometimes took the animals in their hands, by common



consent, it seemed to me, and sprinkled them with brandy. I saw also one of them putting into his mouth the bloody head of his warrior. They then released them again and the fight continued until one of them was killed, or its owner surrendered it as vanquished.

Joseito explained to me the meaning of the shouts, &c. as I understood very little of that awful medley, and said that the howls were offers and wagers, or huzzas to the combatants for their good blows. The wagers were not even:—"Four against one" "One ounce against half an ounce" "One ounce against an *escudito*" (an eighth of an ounce).—The person that accepted said "*pago*" (I pay). The same individual that had just laid a wager in favor of a certain cock, would, perhaps, lay another in favor of the other on different terms.

I remembered my friend the Patriarch on seeing the Captain who was also there in order to keep *order*, if such a term could be applied in that case. He complimented the owners of the winning animals, in order, undoubtedly, to make them devote themselves to the improvement of their stock, and afford them no time to think on other matters. One of the peculiarities that most strikes me in this unhappy people, is that they do not seem to understand the wicked tendencies of their government, to all which they so meekly yield.

After remaining about two hours witnessing the sport, we went out and felt half deaf, on account of the thundering noise. When, on arriving at the plantation, I was asked whether the spectacle had greatly amused me, I thought they were mocking at my having preferred it to the company of my hosts.

On the evening of the same day, I compensated myself for the disgust experienced in the morning, by assisting at a ball of simple country people (*monteros*), and could

I transmit my impression to you faithfully, you would greatly enjoy the novelty of the party. I do not know whether the origin of the *zapateo* could be traced or not. The movements are too quick for Spanish gravity, but bear a strong resemblance to the dances of the Africans. This dance is performed by dragging the feet along the ground, and now and then striking it heavily with the heels, jumping forward and backward, and assuming difficult attitudes, and strange postures at the regular sound of music, produced by a guitar and an instrument made of the hard skin of a fruit called *calabazo*. The woman sometimes turned her back to the man, who would then take off his hat and throw it at her feet, and even kneel down and implore her favors in a beseeching attitude. Several couples performed in succession, and each tried to excel the preceeding ones in the violence of their attitudes, the quickness of their movements and the intensity of the noise produced by their heels in striking them against the floor.

The saloon was crowded ; the chairs were occupied by the ladies that danced, and the gentlemen were walking about mostly with their straw hats on, many smoking, and a few wearing their swords, and shoes provided with spurs. The mothers occupied an adjoining room, whence they looked at their daughters, and observed the gentlemen that were conversing with them. This, however, must have been a difficult matter for those that had not a very keen sight, as all the light in the saloon was furnished by a few wax candles placed in small lanterns hung from the ceiling. The novelty of the spectacle was materially increased by the fact that some of the horses, which were secured to the window gratings, on the outside of the house, thrust their heads through the openings to enjoy the pleasures of the party.

Fortunately, that evening was not disturbed by an occurrence which, it is said, not unfrequently takes place; it is *the breaking up of the ball* (*desbaratar el baile*). Either through jealousy or revenge, some person often wishes to prevent the amusement, or not to allow it to continue. To attain this end, he and his friends, at a given signal, put out the lights, draw their *machetes*, and a fight ensues among the persons of the different parties, while many run to take their wives and daughters to a safe place. As a precaution against this awful medley, my *recomendado's* wife had taken for herself and daughters the seats which were nearest to the door of the room above alluded to, so that they could retreat, and shut themselves up as soon as the least symptom of disorder was seen.

I have been told, that there was not many years ago a braggart, who without any particular motive beyond the desire of evincing his imagined courage, was in the habit of performing these strange feats. They assured me also, that he had on several occasions, the pleasure of seeing all the multitude hurrying out of the saloon, without there being a single person who would take upon himself the charge of punishing such wickedness and insolence; nor was he ever tried by the courts of justice. It is not easy to explain how that man could escape the effects of the resentment of so many persons in the very moment of his transgressions. Our wonder, however, at the fact of his never having been prosecuted in the courts, will be diminished, on considering that there is not the least assurance of the punishment of influential guilty parties, and that the probabilities are in favor of their being declared innocent.

I have seen a native of the Canary Islands, of whom the following has been related to me. He witnessed a quarrel that took place between a planter and his carpen-

ter, by whom he was insulted and called a swindler, for not having paid him his salary. The islander knowing that the planter must have become enraged against the carpenter, proposed to kill him, if the planter would only pay him forty ounces for the deed : "twenty for myself," said he, "and twenty to get out of jail." The planter did not accept the proposition, and inquired of him how he came to be so willing to run the risk of going to the garrote ; he replied, "If I am imprisoned, it will require very little influence to be set at liberty again ; no one will dare to accuse me, because everybody knows, that by giving money to the Judges, I shall be released, and then they will dread my vengeance."

In fact, few persons dare to testify to the truth for fear of the retaliations of the accused, and of the persecutions of the courts ; for as there are no juries, every decision hangs upon the caprice of the Judges, who, it is notorious, are easily bribed or influenced. You may, perhaps argue, that as all affidavits are made under oath, persons who swear falsely expose themselves to the consequences ; but you will be readily convinced of the slenderness of the argument on learning, that such a crime is punished here with only the spiritual penalties of excommunication, and those that do not believe in their efficacy, laugh at the anathema. Some days ago, I read in an American paper a few lines, which will give you a correct idea about this matter :—"It is beyond doubt, that the fatal fault of the Spanish Americans has been their want of truthfulness. It is their fatal facility for making oaths and breaking them—for setting up governments, and conspiring against them, which has been their own ruin and that of their country. They inherited the quality from their forefathers, and each generation has improved upon it."

LETTER XXXI.

Originality of the present Letters — Barreto, the wicked — His soul and body snatched by the devil — Hurricane called after him — Alms in Cuba — Some of Barreto's iniquities — Feudalism in the Island.

MY LETTERS to you, dear Charles, would embrace a greater number of subjects, were I not fearful of being called a plagiarist. I therefore reflect before writing on any matter; and if I recollect having seen what I was going to relate already published, I at once reject it, and only write on it when my views are different from those of former writers, or when their statements have been erroneous; or finally, when it may be expedient to point out the differences that have taken place in latter years. As I desire to transmit to you new facts and observations only, you will find in the works already published on Cuba, what you may miss in my letters, while you will find in these, many matters that those do not contain.

As there was no source of amusement on the plantation, and particularly during the evening from sunset until the time that we used to go to bed, conversation and the narration of stories were always resorted to. We all sat down in the piazza, and everybody did all in his power to enliven the dialogue. Occurrences that have taken

place in the Island were very often related, and though some of them were already known to several of the listeners, they were all new to me. I will tell you of one of the most interesting, as I am almost sure you have not heard anything like it before.

One of the dates that the Almanac of this Island commemorates, is "Barreto's hurricane," a name which was given to that calamity, on account of its having occurred during the funeral of a person of that name, from whom the present Counts of Barreto, in Havana, are descendants. But this name is also applied, because the people in general sincerely believe, that the devil came shortly after his death and carried off not only his soul, but his body also. His corpse having been placed on a high sepulchral monument, temporarily erected in the parlor of his house; the sky suddenly became darkened, and a strong smell of burning brimstone was noticed in his residence; fearful wing-strokes were also felt; they seemed to be produced by enormous bats, which put out the lights of all the long wax candles that had been burning near the dead; and it is even said, that muttering voices which could not be understood, were heard as if uttered all round the hearse.

The negroes, who dressed with long and expensive liveries, were sitting in the parlor taking care of the corpse, were stupified, and fell from their seats, believing that a whole legion of demons was in the saloon; finally, one of them noticed that the body of the deceased had disappeared.

The family really believed that their ancestor had been snatched from the earth, and thrown into hell, even with the clothes he had on; and in order to conceal the fact from the eyes of the public, they ordered a few large heavy stones to be placed with the greatest secrecy in the

coffin, and this being fast nailed, there was no possibility of any person's suspecting that it was empty, while being taken to the cemetery.

The smell of the brimstone instead of disappearing, was becoming more intense ; and all nature seemed to be suffering an awful derangement, for as soon as the hearse was taken out of the house, the hurricane became more violent, and the clouds poured down such torrents of rain as were never before witnessed. The negroes who bore the coffin on their shoulders, were seized with great terror, which increased when they perceived that they had no control over what they carried, for it became alternately light and heavy, and moved horizontally from one side to the other. Sometimes they were scarcely able to support its enormous weight, while at others, it seemed to have a tendency to ascend. Even violent shakes, which threatened to throw them to the ground, were from time to time felt.

On arriving at the church, the funeral procession commenced entering, preceded by the cross, together with the friars of different orders, such as those of St. Augustin, of Mercy, of St. Francis, of Belen, and of St. Dominick, all with their clothes soaked with rain, and a phenomenon was then observed, which spread confusion and wonder among all who were present.

When the negroes bearing the coffin intended to enter the building, they felt some powerful obstacle, which did not allow them to proceed. The coffin could be easily moved in any other direction ; but after many trials it was evident that it would not go into the church, as if it still contained the body of the deceased, who was probably already suffering the punishment of his sins.

The person having charge of the arrangement of the funeral, then ordered the corpse to be conveyed to the

cemetery, which was done without difficulty ; but on lowering the coffin into the vault, the smell of brimstone became exceedingly intense, reports of thunder were heard, thunderbolts fell to the ground, and such was the fury of the tornado and the force of the drenching rain, that the persons composing the procession rushed in great confusion to find a shelter in the chapel of the cemetery, and many of them were thrown down by the violence of the wind. The open ditch (*zanja*), which supplies the city with water overflowed; the sea threatened to inundate it; trees were uprooted, and thrown to distant places; buildings were demolished; and some people went so far as to assert, that strange voices were heard in the air saying, "Barreto is already in hell."

After hearing this story, I inquired of the lady, what had been the crimes committed by that man; and you will agree with me in the opinion, that others equally, and perhaps more culpable, did not deserve so signal and strange a punishment.

He once had company on his plantation, and at the moment of sitting down at table, a creditor arrived, who under the pretence of paying him a visit, came really to remind him of his debt—he was a bald old man, and Barreto being compelled to invite him to dine, took proper measures to play a trick upon him. One of his slaves, a colored man, following his master's instructions, concealed himself in a recess (*barbacoa*), and when the creditor was in the act of raising to his mouth the first spoonful of soup, he threw a large banana, which struck the crown of his head, and dashed the soup around his clothing.

On another occasion, he ordered the carpenter of his plantation to make wooden stocks for the feet, hands and head: after the work was finished, he told the mechanic, that in his opinion the hole intended for the head was too

large, and this being denied, he induced the artizan to try it himself; as soon as the latter put in his head, Barreto locked up the opening, dropped the key into his pocket, and having ordered the overseer not to release him, went to Havana. The constraint and pain would soon have ended the life of the poor carpenter, if the other workmen on hearing his screams, had not liberated him by splitting the stocks with an axe.

Several idle persons who always accompanied him, in order to enjoy his excellent table, and laugh at his witty sayings and doings, arrived once with him at Guanajay, where some entertainments were taking place. Not finding accommodations in the inn or at private places from the influx of visitors, he proposed to spend the night in a lodge placed on wheels, which they found in the market. They all consented, and having removed the vegetables it contained, some cots were procured, and they were accommodated in the best manner circumstances would allow. On discovering his companions sound asleep, he cautiously arose, locked them in, procured two ox teams, which he had already in preparation, tied them to the lodge, and drew it into the river despite the terrified cries of his prisoners, who on finding the water rising waist-high, expected nothing less than instant drowning.

One of them loudly complained of this feat, and used rather harsh words against him. Barreto, in order to revenge himself, ordered a very smart horse to be given to him the next day, under the saddle of which he had placed a bunch of pins in such a manner that the weight of the rider would thrust them into the animal's skin. The victim had scarcely mounted, when the animal began to run about and jump so abruptly that the rider was thrown to the ground upon some large stones, from which he was lifted up bruised and bleeding.

The most singular feature of all his exploits was that he always appeared as if innocent or unconscious of the deed. So, the bald man, the carpenter and the rider were made to believe either that he had not anything to do with it, or that it had been done through mistake or forgetfulness.

It is a custom in many houses in Havana to distribute bread or vegetables among poor people on Saturdays, and large number of mendicants are thus relieved. This is disapproved by some who believe, that vain show rather than true charity is the real cause of the proceeding ; but it cannot be denied that this virtue is very general throughout the Island, and I have been assured that there are many poor families entirely supported by wealthy persons, who pay them from thirty to fifty dollars per month, and do it with the greatest secrecy.

Subscriptions for charitable purposes are always being made and the necessary amount is readily obtained in two or three days. The widows of officers who have died in the Island, especially, obtaining the services of some friend who offers to collect the donations, have not only obtained enough to pay for their passage to Spain, but have also sometimes acquired a sufficient amount to afford them a comfortable living.

Creoles complain, however, that " Cuba is the mother of the foreigners and the step-mother of the natives ;" that "the Spaniards take advantage of Cuban liberality ;" and they bring as an instance the case of a Creole lady who put her name with six ounces, one hundred and two dollars, upon a subscription list in favor of the widow of Gil de Linares, Regent of the Audiencia, while her mother was suffering from want.

Barreto used to give alms at his residence also ; and seeing the court of his house one day full of blind and

lame people, he had recourse to an *ingenious* expedient in order to discover those who only feigned to be crippled and came to participate in the relief given to the suffering. He ordered his men to let loose two bull-dogs which he had, and amused himself in seeing the stumbling of those who could not really see or walk, and also the liveliness with which those that were well in every respect opened their eyes and dropped their crutches to escape the danger.

Several other stories were related to prove Barreto's wickedness, which perhaps belong to different persons. Those that I have narrated are not the worst. His slaves were more especially the victims of his cruelty, and if all that is said of his malignity be true, there was sufficient reason to believe that the devil was not satisfied with having his soul, but required his body also. My opinion, however, is that those facts have been grossly misrepresented, and that at least, one half of them are devoid of truth.

From the oppressive acts of Barreto and many other wealthy and influential persons, a conclusion may easily be deduced, which though it has not been published by the so called historians of Cuba, seems to me to be well grounded, viz :—that a kind of feudal system ruled over the Island until a few years ago. The distinction between *Lords* and *Feudataries* did not exist legally, but there was such a difference in fact. All persons of the middle class had among the wealthy planters a protector (*padri-no*) who exerted his influence on the Captains of the districts and on the Judges, either in their law-suits, or the persecutions to which they were subjected. Few slaves also dared to free themselves, when they had the money to do it, before securing the services of a *padrino*.

The people suffered the tyranny of the government, be-

sides that of the richer class ; and though it may be said that the latter does not now exist, yet the people do not enjoy more liberty, for the government officers have taken the place of that class, and tyrannize in their stead. The liberties and welfare of the inhabitants are rapidly diminishing, because on the one hand the taxation has been increased in order to cover the expense of a large army, which is the only guarantee the government possesses for keeping the Island under its rule ; and on the other, they consider despotism and vexatious regulations as necessary, in order to suffocate and put down, at the moment of their birth, all projects tending to improve the social condition of the people.

LETTER XXXII.

Ladies shopping — Marked prices — Measuring the nails — Attack on the New-York ladies by those of Havana — Fashion of ladies combs — The groomsmen and bridesmaids (*padrinos*) — A present of forty thousand dollars — Speculation in making presents — The physician Romero.

THE subject of our conversation during one of the evenings on the plantation, was one of the customs of Havana which most strikes all foreigners. I mean the manner of shopping practised by the ladies. Those who have carriages do not alight, as our ladies do, and were they to do it, they would find no chairs or seats provided for their use. The carriage stops at the door of the store, one of the salesmen jumps over the counter and hastens to ascertain the wishes of the customer, making the best bow he can. He then goes in, and comes out again loaded with the goods required and many others, which he declares have just arrived from France or England, though they may have been purchased in the United-States, and affirming that they are of the latest fashion, as the Countesses So and So, have purchased of them. One of these interviews lasts from thirty minutes to an hour; there are sometimes three or four carriages in front of the store, and the salesmen then, have to walk some yards in the street

before reaching them. This is the reason why stores having a long front with many doors, or those on the corners are preferred, though the depth be only fifteen or twenty feet.

Ladies having no carriages, go shopping in the evening. I have only seen them in the street, called by the people *Muralla* (Wall-street), despite the efforts of the government, who wish it to be called *Ricla*, after the name of a former Captain-General. The stores there are often seen crowded with white, colored and black women, who dispute with the salesmen as to the quality of the article, whether linen or cotton, and declare that some of their friends have bought the same quality of goods there at a lower price. They also haggle for an abatement of five cents per yard, until they are convinced that they cannot obtain it; and this is frequently done by wealthy ladies, as it seems that shopkeepers generally ask a high price, in order to be able to make the desired deduction. There are, however, some stores where the one price system is established, and in one of them I have seen a sign, with the English words, **FIXED PRICES**.

Many ladies do not go to the stores, and give as a reason, that salesmen who are commonly newly arrived Spaniards, are rogues, who cheat in the quality of the goods, sell damaged for perfect articles, cut off pieces from goods sold by the piece, and give short measure, or as they say, "measure their own nails," (*se miden las uñas*). These ladies commonly send a message to the proprietor of the store, stating the kind of goods wanted, and one of the salesmen goes to the house loaded with articles, out of which the lady makes her selection.

These establishments are neither in their appearance, nor in their variety, nor in the extent of their assortments like the splendid stores of the same class in our large

cities. I am sure that the sales of thirty of them do not amount to two millions, as is the case with that of Stewart. Their profits are, nevertheless, larger in proportion, because they either realize one hundred per cent. on their goods, or practise gross impositions on the customers, as I have been assured they universally do.

This matter of shopping, as I have before ~~stated~~, was the subject of our conversation during a whole evening. I intended to criticize these habits, but the feminine portion of the company revenged themselves with a pretty severe attack on the customs of the New York ladies—"You will never see in Havana," they said, "a lady leaving her house at ten o'clock in the morning, and spending the whole day in the stores, talking to the salesmen, not only about the goods they wish to purchase, but also about the marriages that are going to take place, and inquiring who the parties are, what is their wealth, annual income, &c., and not returning home until five o'clock in the afternoon." "And what do you think," said the old lady, "of the married ladies, who during a single promenade through Broadway, bring about the ruin of their poor husbands, who tremble at the thought of a change of seasons, which takes place four times in the year, and which requires an entirely new assortment of bonnets, furs, cloaks, shawls, &c.?" "A lady," answered the youngest girl, "can go out in Cuba with a dress, costing perhaps only three dollars, provided it be tasteful, while in 'the North,' according to what I have been told, it is necessary always to wear expensive things, as the cost, and not the taste, is what is generally attended to."

The Filibuster also, then rose against me, and said, "What I consider most shocking in the customs of New-York, is that a young lady going to purchase new shoes, places her feet on the salesman's knee, in order to have

them put on." On hearing this, all the circle burst out into a loud laugh which lasted several minutes. I was greatly abashed, and could make no reply. The fault had been entirely mine in introducing such a conversation. I was pretty rigorously dealt with, and at last concluded to laugh with the rest, and thus diminish the mockery of the company.

The excitement of the ladies became exceedingly great, and seemed like a kind of paroxysm. "Who has ever seen in Havana," they asked, "a lady paying three or five hundred dollars for a cloak, or investing five thousand dollars in the lace trimmings of a dress? Where can you find a lady here so lavish as to hire a carriage, which she really does not need, as she has one of her own, and keeping it five or six hours, forgetting that it must be paid for at a high rate?"

"For God's sake," I replied, "let us capitulate! let us capitulate!" But there was no remedy, and I had to suffer the penalty of our ladies faults. They also spoke of that meeting of husbands, which was stated to have taken place some months ago, and whose object was to induce people to bring up boys only. They pretended to believe, that it was truly a project, and not a newspaper production; and they said, that if we allowed such a system to go into operation, we should be considered more cruel than the Spartans, as they only killed those children who were not perfect.

American ladies not wishing to place their countrymen in "tight places," and causing them to be troubled, as I was, by faults, in which nobody but themselves are to blame, should reform their customs in that respect. I have come to the conclusion not to marry any lady until she has visited Havana, and learned some lessons of economy.

In another matter we have reason to felicitate ourselves: Americans are considered here as very good in their capacity of husbands, while the opinion is generally entertained, that the ladies are rather inconsiderate. I had, however, the pleasure of hearing those Cuban ladies acknowledge the merits of our fair sex in all other respects. They had known many in Havana, and were acquainted with several families from the States, remarkable for their excellent behavior and respectability.

This conversation afforded me an opportunity of learning, that some years ago an attempt was made to introduce into the Island a degree of extravagance in the fashions; but the frenzy with which the idea was at first received, awakened the good judgment of the mothers, who immediately put a stop to the evil.

Manufactories of ladies' combs were established by several speculators, and the fashion was made to change entirely every month; this period was in a short time reduced to a fortnight, and lastly to a week, while the prices were always increasing. Persons having four or five daughters, could scarcely meet the expense. The entire abandonment of the fashion was soon effected by the unanimous advice of parents, who, without the aid of a meeting, resolved, as if by common consent, to persuade their daughters to give it up.

The good sense of the Cuban people exerted its beneficial influence also in suppressing another equally detrimental abuse. It was an established rule that the person invited to be the god-father of a child should make a present to the parents. Its amount was increasing until a kind of custom was formed of interesting the vanity of god-fathers in the costliness of their gifts. Persons having no objection to make this habit a means of speculation, used to have their children baptized by any rich man,

who would through vain show improve somewhat their financial condition. It is said, that the Gipsies in Spain, carry their enterprising spirit farther yet, as they have their children baptized in every town through which they pass. One god-father conceived the *happy* idea of making a present of a negro thirteen or fifteen years old *to play* with his god-son. Another, wishing to be more liberal, added a negress for nurse ; and lastly, a person named Silva, made a donation of a forty thousand dollar house in favor of a lawyer named Govantes. This was, however, the last instance recorded, as a few days after, a Count, whose name I do not recollect, sent to the parents a lottery ticket only. Their disappointment was great, but more especially so, when they learned that it had not drawn a prize.

Another custom which was formerly practised to a great extent, and which is still in use, though altered and modified in many respects, is that of the *comadrazgos*. A young lady wishing to give a proof of her attachement to another, sends her a present commonly of small value accompanied with a suitable piece of poetry. The other has to *answer* before a fixed time, if she does not wish to *drown* (ahogar) her friend, and this reply consists in another piece of poetry and a present a little more expensive than the one received. Nevertheless, as this custom has the appearance of being a speculation, it is only practised among very intimate friends. A lady who has become notorious for the many stories that are related of her stinginess, formed on one of these occasions a very extraordinary idea. She received a present from a friend, and instead of keeping it for herself, made three parcels of it, which, accompanied by three pieces of poetry obtained from a second-rate poet, she sent to as many other friends. Their answers afforded her enough to make hers, and she

had, besides, some articles left as a reward of her ingenious device.

Some persons are accustomed to make presents to each other on their birth-days or saints-days. I have not seen this practised on New Years, nor is everybody greeted on that occasion with "A happy new year," as is the case with us. Several lawyers and physicians receive on those days presents from their clients, which in no way interfere with the regular payement of their fees.

This custom, which prevailed to a considerable extent in former years, is, I have been told, fast disappearing, and it is generally believed that the person who knew how to work this mine to his greatest advantage, was a physician named Romero, who being poor at first, and by no means superior to any of his professional brethren in skill or science, left over one million dollars capital. Two of his sons have purchased titles; one is a Count and the other a Marquis. In order to prove how aristocratical are the ideas of some families, it is related that notwithstanding these titles of distinction, a young lady to whom one of them proposed marriage, replied that he still had the *smell* of a physician.

LETTER XXXIII.

Cocuyos or glow-worms — Instinct of a small dog — Sentence of a runaway negro — Want of liveliness in the Havana ladies — Its causes — Their beautiful feet — Charges against them — Their apology.

YOU are aware that our glow-worms or fire-flies can bear no comparison with the Cuban *cocuyos*. These latter are much larger, and the light they produce is strong enough to light tolerably well a dark room. I will not enter into a disquisition on the Natural History of those luminous insects, and will only say that their numbers greatly increase in the rainy season; that after dark they come out from the rotten trunks of the trees in which they live; and that it is an agreeable amusement to catch them, either by holding one in the hand, or by forming a luminous circle with a burning coal. In this manner, many are caught, and suitable cages, large enough to contain several dozens, are filled with little exertion.

They require no other care but to be bathed once in the day; and sugar-cane deprived of its hard skin is the food commonly given to them. I have read that when the British invaded the Island, in seventeen hundred and sixty-two, they saw one night so many of these worms in a neighboring wood, that they fled terrified, thinking that

they were enemies in ambush. Though unable to guarantee the truthfulness of the statement, I would remark that the month of June, when the event is said to have happened, is the time when these insects are most abundant.

While on the plantation, though the season of these animals was over, we used to see one or two every evening. The boys and myself would run after the insect, which was frequently made prisoner, and given to the young ladies. They confined it together with the others in the cage, which afforded them the pleasure of having their room lighted after going to bed, with these luminaries. Many ladies are in the habit of tying two or three in the end of their handkerchiefs, and others put them in their bosoms, which then look as if ornamented with shining emeralds.

I do not believe in the veracity of a traveller who, according to the statement of a book published in London, wrote a description of his travels in Cuba with the aid of the light produced by a few of these insects; nor have I seen them pierced through with a needle and strung like the beads of a rosary, as is stated in another book printed in the States. A string could easily be formed, however, without producing any suffering to the animal, by tying together their necks, or the muscle which unites the head and the body.

The following is related of an elderly widow lady, who saved her life through the sagacity of a small dog and the light of a cage of glow-worms. She was on her plantation, and one evening went to bed and called the animal, as usual, to jump upon her bed, and sleep at her feet. The dog instead of obeying, would not approach the bed, and the lady, thinking that it was a caprice of the animal, put out the light and prepared to go to sleep. The

dog, then, taking hold with her teeth of the hanging end of the quilt, pulled it, and the widow, thinking that the animal wished to be helped to jump, stretched her arm and placed her on the bed; but she jumped on the floor and began to pull the quilt again. The lady did not mind the stubbornness of the animal, which on seeing this, endeavored to pull all the quilt off the bed, whereupon she rose, and on stooping in order to recover it, she perceived, by the aid of the light of the cocuyos, a huge negro sleeping under the bed.

This negro belonged to the plantation, but was a runaway, and had come, perhaps, to kill her, as she also observed a long dirk-knife in his hand. The lady then called in a low tone of voice a trust worthy servant girl, who was sleeping in the adjoining room, and not wishing to make a noise, she had to call her three or four times. At last she came, and without telling her what had happened, the lady took hold of her shoulder, jumped from the bed, and rushed to the door of the room. The overseer and watchmen, on hearing her call, arrived before the runaway negro had awoken, who unfortunately found on entering the room, half a bottle of brandy on the lady's toilet, which he drank, and consequently yielded to the effects of the narcotic, notwithstanding his efforts to keep awake. The apology given by the negro to explain the motives of his conduct, was not satisfactory: he said, that he was very cold in the woods, that the mosquitoes so tormented him, that not having been able to sleep during many nights, he thought he could not find a more comfortable and secure place than the one he had just selected.

This history excited my admiration at the sagacity of the animal in not having barked, as it was natural under the circumstances, and apprized me also of a fact, already alluded to, and which I should never have learned, had

not this story been related to me, viz.: the common practice of the owners in concealing the crimes of their slaves. The lady condemned the negro to receive a *novenary*, or twenty-five lashes daily for nine days, and to wear shackles until further notice; because the circumstance of his having runaway on account of a severe punishment inflicted, afforded strong ground for the suspicion that his purpose had been to kill her. I then inquired why she did not prosecute him in the courts, and was told, that in that case, she should have lost his value, and perhaps have had to pay besides the costs of the proceedings.

While we were hunting the glow worms, I observed, that the ladies did not know how to run, nor wish to learn; and as I had already perceived, that after walking slowly not over a half mile, they became tired, and had to sit down on the grass, I could not help expressing my surprise, and explaining to them in the best manner I could, how injurious such a habit must prove not only to their health, but to their safety, in case of being obliged to run, in order to escape an approaching danger. Whether it is the effect of laziness, as I have been assured by some, or not, I am unable to say: but their mode of education and the prejudice, that violent movements are unbecoming in the fair sex, are, I believe, the leading causes. My opinion, however, is, that one of the greatest charms of the ladies, is a certain liveliness of movement acquired by constant practice, and the grace which they impart to the most trifling motions of the body.

I told them that our girls were accustomed to play and run in the streets; that they were as smart as the boys, and consequently, that they could escape danger much more easily than the Cuban ladies. I also described to them the swiftness of our countrywomen in running up and down stairs, in jumping into the omnibuses, or in

rushing to get into a railroad car ; but they laughed, and replied, that "those habits would be very good in cold climates, but not in countries where an excessive heat was experienced during the greater part of the year."

The climate, and the want of practice, must certainly increase also the sensibility of their feet. The soles of their shoes, are besides very thin ; and lastly, their feet are so exceedingly narrow and short, that they do not afford a sufficient support to the body. This is a beauty peculiar to the Havana ladies, and though the feet of the Chinese women are also small, they are far inferior in the general proportions, being ill-formed and dwarfish, while those of the former are perfect, and seem to belong to young girls. The feet of the Spanish ladies are, on the contrary, comparatively large, as is also the case with the Spaniards, when compared with those of the Creoles. In general, it may be said, that smallness of the feet is peculiar to persons born in America ; you may easily be convinced of the truth of the assertion, by observing those of the Indians, which are found very small in comparison with those of Englishmen, for instance.

In a book written on Cuba, and full of misrepresentations, the Havana ladies are accused of spending most of the time in their carriages ; of sitting on an easy chair, while alone in their homes, in *dishabill*, and receiving the fresh air from the fan of a servant ; of breathing only the smell of flowers and essences ; of having no other business than going from the toilet to the bath ; and finally, of being so feeble, as to call a servant to hand them the handkerchief that has just fallen from their hands.

But as far as my own observations and inquiries have gone, this description is greatly exaggerated ; the great liability of travellers to generalize single cases, has, perhaps, led to these misrepresentations. The Creole ladies

being endowed with taste, like what is good ; they also deserve praise for the exercise of that propensity to which ladies must so particularly attend, the desire to enhance their beauty and grace ; and their movements participate of a delicate, yet irreproachable softness. If these are to be considered as faults, I wish that my future spouse may be guilty of them.

That the love of cleanliness has not been inherited from the Spaniards, is proved by the testimony of numberless Spanish writers : and recently Fr. Gerundio has published the following incident, as having happened to himself :

On arriving at a country town in Spain, he engaged a room in one of the inns, and not finding water to wash his hands and face covered with perspiration and dust, after his journey, he called for some. On the following morning he felt unwell, as he had taken a slight fever, which confined him to his room for a week, at the expiration of which period he concluded to leave, and again called for water to wash with. "How is that ?" responded his hostess, "did you not wash yourself the day you arrived ?"

LETTER XXXIV.

Fright produced by a snake — Another by cockroaches — *Ambulias* — Creole supper — Breakfast and dinner — *Ajiaco*—Wine and drunkards — *Majarete*

You have not yet been informed, perhaps, of the fact, that the only poisonous animals in Cuba, are the hairy spiders (*araña peluda*) ; for scorpions only produce with their bites a swelling of short duration which is readily cured by trifling application, or without any at all. I was not, however, quite sure of this at the beginning, and of this the girls took advantage one evening to give me a fright.

As I went into my room to go to bed, I saw a large snake about eight feet long, and over two inches in diameter at the largest part of the body, coiled on the bed and with its head lying on my pillows. I could hardly restrain myself from uttering a cry, and could not help jumping backwards; and on reaching the door I was tempted to shut it, as the animal, on seeing me enter the room, raised its head more than a foot above the pillow, and I was afraid it might chase me, and bite three or four persons in the house.

But at this instant a peal of laughter greeted me from the ladies who had been watching all my motions, and

who thus punished my cowardice. I then learned, that shortly before my entering the room, a servant had gone in and left the snake on the bed. This was rather mortifying to me, and I raised the animal on a stick and threw it out the window; but being told that it was necessary to kill it on account of its depredations on chickens and hens, I ran after it, and had the pleasure of revenging myself on the poor creature for the fright it had so innocently caused me.

The girls, however, were not allowed to remain unpunished. Joseito undertook to devise a suitable penalty, and carry it into execution. When we were taking our supper the next evening, he very quietly put on the shoulder of each of them a *cockroach*, commonly called *martina*, though its proper name is *cucaracha*. The scene that ensued was frightful, and cannot be described. Had the ladies been bitten by some of those East India snakes which effect almost instant death, they could not have cried more loudly, or twisted themselves more than they did when they felt these harmless insects. They tore off their dresses, jumped and shook themselves, and even after seeing them killed, thought they were still on them. It was not on account of fear, they said, but of aversion, that they had evinced such an intense disgust. One of them, who had touched one of the animals, washed her hands with soap two or three times, and none of them sat at the table after the occurrence. Joseito had to hide himself, and I laughed at first, but was afterwards seriously alarmed, fearing some one might have a fit.

However, I did not fail to render due honor to my allowance of *ambuilas*, a name given to very thin fried slices of unripe bananas, of which I consumed a whole dish every evening, accompanied with a mixture of the savory white rice and a hash (*aporrado*) of moutton

or beef; and also drank a mammoth cup of excellent milk, drawn from the cow before me, mixed with fine-flavored coffee.

Our daily supper consisted of some other dishes besides those above named, and as they constitute what is called a Creole supper (*Cena criolla*), I will give you a description of them.

I will first remark that bread was a rarity; for everybody preferred green roasted bananas, or large half ripe ones, covered with lard or butter after being roasted. The other dishes were, salt beef from the Vuelta de Abajo, smoked pork, and *chicharrones*, or chacknels, made with the skin of the pig, well prepared and fried. They acquire a beautiful white color, and are so soft and brittle that they crumble to pieces as soon as they are put into the mouth. The hash was spread in the dish upon a piece of wet *casabe*, forming together with the bananas an excellent substitute for bread: I liked it better when toasted. They also served an excellent dish called *ropa vieja* (old clothes!) made of beef covered with a savory sauce; and also boiled eggs and Indian meal cakes.

These suppers, it is easy to imagine, might well have produced serious indigestions; and on some days moreover, minced meat, roast turkey, salads and several other articles with which families provide themselves in Havana when going to the country, were added to our entertainment. The latter kind of supper is called of *Noche Buena*, as it is served on Christmas eve, even in the houses that are not in the habit of taking supper.

The creole breakfast consists of pretty nearly the same articles I have named as served for the supper. Calf, or mouton tripe (*mondongo*) cooked with a variety of vegetables is also used, and a roast pig occasionally makes its appearance and produces a pleasant surprise.

The creole dinner, does not include what is called *olla* by Spaniards; but they make another dish styled *ajiaco*, which has a similar appearance. It is formed by mixing a large number of articles which I will here mention, endeavoring not to forget any, to enable you to form an idea of the composition. Salt beef, smoked pork, fresh pork, especially the tail, ham, black pudding, sausages, bacon, calf's feet, sweet potatoes, yams, sweet yuca, green bananas and pumpkin. Cabbages, peas and kidney-beans are sometimes added to the already long list of components. The whole is placed in a very large and deep dish together with the sauce in which it has been cooked, and a piece of every thing is served to each person in a plate large enough to contain them. The variety of tastes forms a savory compound, and I have observed that it is used alternately with the *olla*, and is not very frequently served. The difference between this and the *ajiaco* is that the former must necessarily have Spanish peas, and that it does not contain so many kinds of meat.

I have not spoken about the wine, which cannot be considered as a produce of the Island. I have been assured, however, that some efforts have been made to manufacture it, and also that the grape grows pretty well: but the qualities I have seen are inferior to those of Europe or the Canary Islands. Several years ago, wine was drawn from the pine-apple and other fruits, but the process has been discontinued, and there are even persons who are not aware of the fact. Formerly the *zambumbia* was much used; it was manufactured by properly brewing the juice of the sugar-cane (*guarapo*); and at the present time a drink like cider is made by filling a bottle with that juice as it leaves the mill, corking it tight, and keeping it for three days well covered with sand. If more than this time is allowed to elapse, it becomes sour and is

entirely spoiled. The opening of the bottle produces the same noise as if it were of Champagne.

In many Creole houses no wine is served at breakfast or supper, but at dinner the French claret, or the Catalonian are always drunk, besides other kinds used with the dessert, and a small glass of spirits after the coffee.

I will not dare to say that intemperance is as general as among us, because as we are called by the Spaniards "The drunkards," it is but natural to think that we possess that quality in a greater degree than they do. If I am allowed, however, to state what I think and see, I will only say that there are many persons accustomed to get drunk with brandy or gin, and that the number of attendants who spend the whole lounging day at the bars, is by no means small. They commonly expect to be invited to drink by others, and this is frequently done on account of the cheapness of liquors. A bottle of *aguardiente de caña* commonly costs only six pence.

I cannot conclude this letter without speaking to you of a dish which may be called by antonomasia the *true Creole*. It is said that a certain Epicurean Clergyman, on his arrival from Spain, tasted it once, and was so pleased, that he ordered his cook to serve it at all his meals. It is known by the name of *majarete*, and I will send you the receipt to make it, as soon as a collection which I am forming of Cuban dishes and sweet-meats shall be finished. As it is made of green corn I think it might be had in New-York as well as here.

LETTER XXXV.

Moral education — Causes of its corruption — The Count's young mulatto — A Marquis — The father glutton and his family starving — Wicked influence of the government — Two great wants — Jesuits.

THE different works written on Cuba, acquaint us with the low state of education in general, scientific as well as religious. I will not, therefore, dwell upon this heart-breaking subject, sufficient of itself to make all generous minds in the world abhor a government, which not only disregards this important duty, but exerts a powerful opposition to all improvements, although hypocritically affecting to hold liberal views.

But in none of those books have I read anything on the purely moral education of youth, and I herewith send you some of my observations on this highly important matter :—

One evening it was said in our circle, that the Count * * * had purchased a mulatto boy of ten years of age, for the sole purpose of playing with and waiting on his son, who was then six years old. Both soon became aware of their respective positions, and as is easy to be conceived, the child exercised a wanton despotism over the slave, who, in order to avoid his anger was compelled

to coax him, to conceal his tricks from the eyes of his parents, and to aid him in deceiving them. What the character formed by such persons would be ; of what virtues they would be capable, and what vice would long remain unknown to them, may be readily imagined.

This statement attracted my attention very particularly, and I was greatly shocked, when after inquiring minutely into the facts, I was convinced that the proceedings of the Count, assimilated to those of many other parents in proportion to their means.

There is at present in Havana a Marquis, who is generally considered a mere mass of wretchedness. He possesses in my opinion, a portion of every existing vice, without the redeeming quality of a single virtue, to the existence of which, his nature appears estranged. When for the first time, I heard of this personage, I at once traced the mischief to a defect in his education, and in this I did not mistake. His nurse had been a negress ; he had spent the greater part of his childhood in the kitchen, and had imbibed the feelings and sentiments of the slaves ; he had not been willing to improve himself, and his teachers became tired, and lost all hopes of improving his intellectual capacity. His only propensity was to play with the young negroes, whom he flogged if they did not readily yield to his commands ; he soon became a deceitful gambler, and ere long became dissatisfied with even the large sums which his father with a bountiful and inconsiderate hand allowed him. He, therefore, began to steal from his father's safe what he needed to pay for the services of persons who were teaching him new vices, and procuring him the enjoyment of illicit pleasures.

Though not above thirty, he looks like a worn out old man ; he is feeble and infirm ; has lost all memory, ener-

gy and vigor; is despised by everybody; and being already insensible to physical pleasures, he cannot enjoy any moral satisfaction; unable, as he is, to remember a single praiseworthy work performed during his whole life. No credence whatever is given to his word, as he rarely speaks the truth, nor is any confidence placed in his promises. What can be the usefulness of such a being to mankind? What will be the condition of his children, if he has any?

I also very frequently see a married man, who to say the least of him, goes to take dinner with some of his more wealthy relatives, and there gluts himself with the most delicious viands, at the same time conscious of the existing privations and misery endured by his loving family at home. It is also said of him, that when his landlord calls to collect the rent, he becomes greatly excited, and almost with sword in hand, alleges that being a *nobleman*, he *must* have a house to live in. His daughters and sons as well as himself, being all *noble*, are thus prevented from working. The first named, are always confined to the house, and the windows closed so that those passing by may not see their ragged dresses. They hire servants to do their cooking, washing, &c., as it would be degrading to their character to perform these household duties; and when the month's pay is due, and they are unable to pay, they suffer unconcernedly the insults of their creditors. Meanwhile, the father goes around borrowing here and there a few dollars, though perfectly aware of his inability to repay them; and from those persons whom he has once cheated, he asks money the second time not as a loan, but as an alms. It is necessary that all persons should contribute to afford a comfortable living to a *nobleman*, though he may not deserve to live.

In these two instances that I have quoted, another powerful cause exerted its influence, viz.: bad example. The ancestors of these persons had been corrupt and wicked; and it is almost impossible that anything but impurities should flow from an impure source. Even when parents are virtuous and honorable, the continual intercourse of children with slaves, must produce many evils; and my friend Don Antonio, is so fully convinced of this, that his greatest exertions are directed to prevent as far as possible, this injurious, yet necessary intercourse, and also any intimacy which may spring up from it. No one of his children has a servant devoted especially to him, and the girls have not negresses of their own, a very rare occurrence in Havana, where there is scarcely a young lady that has not her confidential slave.

Besides the wicked influence which slaves necessarily exert, there is another, and perhaps still more mischievous source of degradation to the Creole character. The Spanish government encourages immorality, rewards unworthy Cubans, persecutes and despises all those who are worthy and honorable, and destroys all germs of goodness by the spectacle which it continually exhibits of corrupt officers occupying the highest ranks in society. The cock and bull fights, the indecent balls in the saloons known by the name of *Sebastopol* and *Escauriza*, are also encouraged. Two lawyers, universally hated, one on account of his infamous denunciations, and the other, by his degrading flatteries, are objects of governmental esteem, while men distinguished by their great talents and wisdom are threatened with accusations, and kept in fear by the thought of being tried by a Spanish Judge.

These great evils, in the opinion of good Creoles, cannot be remedied until two of their principal causes are

effectually removed:—the overthrow of the Spanish government, is one, and the most pressing want of the Island of Cuba: the abolition of slavery, is the other. Whether the former should be effected in an absolute manner, or by annexation to our Confederation, or to any other power; and whether the latter should be accomplished by degrees, as is generally believed, or at once, it is not my business to consider now, nor are these last questions of a paramount importance. Let the Cubans acquire their liberty, which can never be obtained by money, but with blood, and after becoming freemen, let them deliberate upon what is most expedient for them. Let them do it soon, also, for the people will be more corrupt every day, and therefore less worthy and capable of enjoying the blessings of self-government.

There are fortunately many Cubans, who like Don Antonio, endeavor with all their might to counteract the mischievous effects of such a régime. They have already discovered, that the views of the government are treacherous, and they refuse to swallow the bait of the Jesuits, and other lures of this description by which unwary people are caught; or to send their children to learn the degradation and the adoration of despots, which the crafty disciples of Loyola inculcate on their tender minds. It is truly painful to witness the spectacle exhibited by the crowds of innocent youth who attend that impure school. I entertain, however, the consolatory hope, that the efforts of wickedness will not suffice to arrest the torrent of just and true ideas, and the whirlwind of the revolution.

LETTER XXXVI.

The girls tired of being in the country — Don Tomas, the eccentric
— A degraded personage — The accomplished Royalist —
High price of sugar the sole want of this personage — True
Nobility — Don José Entralgo — His honesty.

AFTER being eight days on the plantation, the girls became tired, and did not wish to remain longer. On their arrival, they seemed so displeased with the Capital, and the most insignificant trifle in the country so delighted them, that I thought they would stay more than the week they at first contemplated, and I even imagined (juvenile illusion!) that perhaps some attachment to my person aided that enthusiasm. But as soon as the excitement of the first moments was over, they began to miss the noise and bustle of the City, and even the shouts of the pedlars passing through the streets; and they soon became weary of the monotony of our life and the silence of our quarters.

Some excitement, however, was produced on the last day by the unexpected arrival of a nephew of the old lady. He was on his way to Havana, and stopped to accompany the family on their return, which was to take place the next day. This person being of an original type, I shall attempt a description of his visit, hoping it may prove an amusement to you, equal to the delight his short residence afforded me.

As soon as Joseito saw him coming, he remarked that we were going to have fun, but advised me not to laugh very loud, as he was very *escamon* (resentful). He also stated that he never troubled himself to speak the truth, and that he was always endeavoring to hide his great stinginess and stupidity by means of cunning tricks, and that he was generally considered the most ridiculous person in existence. The young ladies began to laugh and were preparing themselves for a great display of follies and eccentricities ; and their mother said, smiling, that we must have some regard for the person, not on account of any good quality which he might possess, but only in pity for the meanness with which he had been endowed by nature.

Having arrived early in the morning, he had time enough, before going to breakfast, to tell several falsehoods about the large crop he expected to gather, the wonderful fertility of his lands, &c., and as soon as we sat down at the table, the fun commenced. He said that the taste of mutton was disgusting, and that he, not only did not like it, but could ascertain by the smell alone, where a dish of mutton was, though one hundred yards distant. At the same time, he was devouring a hash made of it, and said that that *corned beef* was very good. On hearing this, we could scarcely restrain ourselves from laughing.

Joseito then observed to Don Tomas, for such was his name, that he had no watch, and advised him to buy one. Don Tomas quickly replied, that he did not need one, because he knew the time by the position of the sun and the stars. "And besides," he observed, "a watch is a great annoyance, for it shows the gradual extinction of its owner's life." His only true objection, however, was the cost of the article.

The youngest girl, knowing that his knowledge of orthography was not very intimate, put a question to him on punctuation, adding that her brother had not been able to answer it. Don Tomas then replied in a tone of self-importance that it was an *impoliteness* to make use of signs of punctuation, as they point out to the reader the place where he was to stop, which evidently presupposes that he does not know how to do it. At this, we all burst into loud laughter, knowing that his true reason for expressing this opinion was to conceal his ignorance ; but he did not feel abashed.

Joscito spoke about Astronomy, and feigning ignorance, asked him whether he believed that the Earth was always changing its position or not. He laughed contemptuously at the idea, and replied that all that was nonsense. The Filibuster then began to adduce the proofs of his assertion offering to convince him, but his opponent said, "that fools, only could change the opinions they had once entertained, and that as he did not belong to that class, it was impossible to convince him." He added, "All your reasonings would be useless."

The above propositions will suffice as specimens of many others which he maintained during his stay with us. Had not I seen this living wonder, I could never have believed that such ignorance and arrogance could be united with such wanton and foolish pride, and such a lack of good principles, in a person of his social condition. In order to give you an idea of his feelings, I will only say that while in Havana his family does not incur any expense, as his father-in-law provides for them all ; and that he is accustomed to buy every day sixpence worth of fruits, and lock himself up in a room to eat them without giving a morsel to his wife or children.

His cowardice is almost beyond description. While on

his estate, he does not dare even to give orders to the overseer ; and if he ever proposes anything, it is always an absurdity, and the overseer laughs and pays no attention to his words. When he wants to discharge any of his workmen, he does it by a letter which he writes from Havana, as he fears that on hearing the order verbally given, the workman would answer him with a blow.

Whenever he relates any event, and perceives incredulity in the audience, he adds : " I saw it," though the thing in itself might be absurd or impossible. This procedure admits of only two remedies : either to disregard his assertions, or to knock him down, an extremity to which more than one of his hearers has been tempted to recur.

The old lady had advised me not to speak a single word of politics before him, as she was afraid that notwithstanding their relationship, he would apprise the government of everything he heard, and perhaps greatly exaggerate it, for slander had become one of his habits, and he could never relate what had taken place exactly. Joseito wished, however, to afford me an opportunity of knowing the degradation of such a man, and I asked him what he knew about the *pícaros* (villainous) pirates. He then began to speak, and exhibited proofs of the most abject servility. The Queen, was in his opinion, a kind of divinity ; he regarded all allusions to misconduct in her as groundless ; he rebutted all charges preferred against the Captain-Generals and other crown officials who had abused their power ; and when notorious and well attested misdemeanors were referred to, he exclaimed emphatically, "*falsehood !*"

During the whole conversation, no generous ideas, no liberal opinions, nor even humane feelings were heard from his mouth. All his aspirations seemed absorbed in

the high prices of sugar; his particular benefit was the only apparent object in view. He said there ought to exist incessant peace and tranquillity, in order to promote the influx of vessels to the harbor, which was, in his opinion the only cause of the rise of prices; as if the rates ruling the foreign markets did not exert any influence upon prices in Havana.

We were also not a little alarmed, on hearing him declare, that everybody was under obligations to denounce *traitors*; by which term we learned he designated all those who spoke against the Spanish government, and as we surmised, he regarded as intrusive revolutionists.

He pretended to belong to the highest nobility, because a certain king addressed to one of his ancestors certain flattering expressions, which at present I do not recollect. Undoubtedly well aware of his total want of personal merit, he said that the Spanish proverb—"The person who was born noble, is not thereby a gentleman," was pure nonsense.

He thought there were only three classes of respectable people—those having riches, those having titles given by the government, and those of illustrious birth, though they might have obtained their money and titles by tricks and frauds, or be loaded with vices and crimes. An anecdote which the lady related, afforded him an opportunity of explaining these sentiments. The occurrence being a rare one, I will narrate it, and you will thereby be able to see that if there are in Cuba degraded and corrupt characters like that of Don Tomas, others deserve our highest esteem and admiration.

A widower named José Entralgo, lived with a son about ten years old, in rather afflicted circumstances. On the death of the godfather of the boy, his will was examined, and Entralgo was found to have been appointed

the only heir of his property, amounting to three hundred thousand dollars, almost all in cash. He engaged extensively in the business of discounting paper, but continued to live as poorly as before, by which course he came to be regarded as a very covetous man. After the lapse of three years, he went before Judge Suarez, accompanied by a young man, and deposed in legal form, that in accordance with oral instructions which he had received from the deceased, it was his duty to give to the youth, as soon as he should reach the age of twenty-five, which time had now arrived, the \$300,000 inherited, less ten thousand, which the defunct bequeathed to his godson, and five thousand to himself.

The wonder and astonishment of the Judge, the persons present, and the young man who was about to receive the benefit, and who was probably an illegitimate son of the deceased, on witnessing this proof of shining honesty, was beyond description; and the admiration of the young man became greater still, when Entralgo placed in his hands not only the amount of the capital, but also a considerable sum which it had accumulated while in his possession, besides a minute and accurate account of his administration. The wishes of the deceased were entirely unknown to any other person but Entralgo, and he might easily, if inclined to do so, have applied the whole property to his own use.

Don Tomas then said, that he had certainly heard the story; that he knew Entralgo, and that no one but a *beast*, such as he was, would have been guilty of such folly.

I was tempted to throw my plate in his face. A general *groan* accompanied by contemptuous looks, was the reception given to his villainous assertion.

LETTER XXXVII.

Return to the Capital — A bad custom of New-York — The Catholic Churches of the Empire city — The Churches of Havana — *Novenas* — *Calambucos* — Papists — Procession of the Viaticum — Misdemaneors at Church — Bad Preachers.

EARLY in the morning of the following day, my hosts started for Havana. The circumstance of the arrival of Don Tomas, enabled Joseito to stay with me some days, which we employed in several little excursions; and afterwards we also returned to the Capital through districts which I had never seen, and which afforded me good opportunities of completing my knowledge on several points already treated.

As the weather was rather cool, the general opinion was, that the danger of the yellow fever had passed, and this was the reason why I did not hesitate to return to Havana, and take up my quarters at my *recomendado's*, who did not allow me to go again to the hotel. The pressing requests of Joseito compelled me to accept his kind invitation.

I shall now enter, therefore, upon the description of my impressions of the Capital, and upon the development of the useful and interesting information gathered from the conversation of the persons alluded to in some of my former letters. These impressions will not, however, be

related in strict chronological order to avoid numerous repetitions.

I will first speak of a Creole who had just arrived from New-York, where he had spent the whole summer and fall. He was delighted with the country in general, and especially with the enviable freedom enjoyed there. Nevertheless, he complained loudly against two customs. He said that our young ladies are a little too open-hearted; that after being acquainted for a short time with a young man, they require him to invite them to ride, to go to theatres, or to costly lunches or suppers at Taylor's.

He also added that he was greatly surprised at these exactions, as here, not only are young ladies never seen doing thus, but a powerful motive is always required to induce them to accept such invitations, or even the most trifling present. He said that there was a young lady in the boarding house where he stopped, who spent more of his money than he could easily spare, and he was, therefore, obliged to leave the city.

His other complaints were directed against the rules established at the Catholic Churches there. The preacher of a certain Church, he stated, has no other subject for his sermons than asking money from the brethren for the service, and threatening those who do not yield to the request with sure condemnation. He also said that those who did not pay could get no seats; and this surely must have seemed shocking to our narrator, for such is never the case in Havana. Lastly, he told us that many Catholics in New-York prefer to go to Protestant Churches, as he did during the last months of his residence there, in order to avoid expense. I am unable to decide upon the truthfulness of this last assertion; should you consider it worth while to inquire, your facilities for doing so are far superior to mine.

I think, however, that the rules observed in the aforesaid Church, are not enforced in other temples of that city. I have been several times in Saint Ann's, near the Bible House, and I was never required to pay for my seat; but on my going once into the German Catholic Church in Third street, the sexton came and spoke to me in German, and on hearing that I could not reply in his own language, he asked in English for the price of admission, without which he would not have allowed me to remain.

Catholics, in this country at least, do not pay much attention to religious services on the Sabbath. Churches, indeed, are opened at sunrise, but there is no service after twelve o'clock, and they are seen crowded only when extraordinary masses are celebrated, and good music is to be enjoyed. I have often seen a dozen persons only attending, and not over one hundred are ever seen during the common service, if we except two or three particular Churches at a certain hour of the day. As far as I have been able to observe, the whole Sunday service is here completed during the fifteen or twenty minutes that the mass lasts, and there is no other during the rest of the day, which is devoted to parties, excursions, dinners, and all kinds of amusements. Theatres are generally more crowded then, than on any other day during the week.

Besides the Sundays, there are many other holidays throughout the year, marked in the almanac with a cross during which it is allowed to work after attending mass, and are called *de media fiesta* (half holidays). Others are marked with two crosses, and during these, labor of all kinds is forbidden, and they are styled *de fiesta entera* (whole holidays). The attendance at church is so limited during the first named, that it might be called none, and I have been *entirely alone* in the Cathedral, on

several occasions during the hours of regular service. I believe, therefore, that I can confidently assert that in Havana, as well as in all other places in the Island where I have been, there is no devotion. I will here, however, refer to some exceptions to this general rule, which I have also observed.

Some families are in the habit of exercising prayers, (*novenas*), imploring favors of the Virgin and the Saints, which are continued for *nine* days. To effect this, the image of the saint is placed between two lighted wax candles, and the people kneel down before it, and recite certain prayers corresponding to that day, contained in a pamphlet. Other families pray the trisagion, with the chorus of "holy, holy, holy!" whenever there is a severe storm, to escape the thunderbolts, which in the rainy season fall with a frequency truly frightful.

Another exception to the general rule of the want of devotion should be mentioned. There is a class of persons who go to church very frequently, attend several masses every day throughout the year, never fail to go to the *Circular*, a service performed every afternoon in the church of the city whose turn it is, and endeavor to place themselves in the most conspicuous spot of the building, extending their arms, and giving proofs of having their minds absorbed in deep religious implorations.

Many of these persons are, undoubtedly, truly sincere, but in general, I do not consider those who make such a display worthy of confidence. Don Antonio asserts, that there are many persons who believe, that by attending mass in the morning, and beating their breasts, they obtain forgiveness for every transgression they commit during the day. He also pointed out to me one of these hypocrites, who had stationed himself in the chancel of the church called *La Salud*, where every one could easily

see him : he was on his knees, bent to the ground, with his arms extended. This man was a regular scoundrel.

It is said that a certain Colonel named Fuero, was not satisfied with doing this, but in order to edify the public, caused his *calesero* (driver), to place himself behind him with his arms stretched also ; after which he went to the Court of the Military Commission, of which he was a member, slept soundly during the examinations and other proceedings of a case on trial, and then voted for the death of the prisoner, when his fellow-judges voted for four or six years' imprisonment.

Persons of the aforesaid habits, are designated by the name of *calambucos*, a Spanish word applied to the gum-tree, called *Callophyllum calaba*, whose similarity to them I have not been able to perceive.

My opinion in regard to the religious feelings of the Cubans is, that they are less devoted partizans of the Pope than any other Catholics, as they neither believe in the infallibility of the Roman pontiff, nor buy any bulls except that called *of the dead*, without which no consecrated grave is allowed to any person. They do not generally believe the miracles imputed to saints, and it is a common occurrence to laugh at them. Some persons, however, still worship the images of the Virgins of Charity, of the Cobre, &c.

It is known that the Catholic Church requires its members to confess their sins, and receive the Communion at least once in the year ; but according to the information I have gathered on this point, few persons of either sex comply with this command at all, and fewer still do it within the prescribed time. The boxes (*confesionarios*), in the churches provided for the confessions are always seen empty ; and I have also perceived that the Communion is very seldom administered.

Persons on the approach of death, receive this sacrament in their beds with imposing ceremonies. The friends and relatives of the sick walk from church to the house with their heads uncovered and a wax candle in hand, on both sides of the carriage in which the Priest takes THE VERY HOLY (*El Santisimo*). A young man from among those present sometimes acts as driver, and the procession is preceded by a boy ringing a large bell. Many families do not use a new carriage until it has been once employed in this kind of procession.

If they pass before a guard-room, two soldiers join them, and the others kneel down, take off their caps, place their guns with the barrel downwards, and beat the drum as long as the carriage is seen from the place. All persons met with in the streets, kneel down also, and those who go in carriages, stop, leave them, and spreading their handkerchiefs on the ground, kneel down also. The people in their houses all along the route of procession do the same, bearing lighted candles to their windows and balconies while the procession is in progress of passing.

The room of the sick person is meanwhile ornamented in the best possible manner. An altar is temporarily erected for the performance of the service. As many of the suite as possible, go into the room with their lighted candles, and bend their knees while Communion is administered. The procession then returns to church in the same manner, though through different streets, in order to make the ceremony as public as possible.

On these occasion more devotion and piety are observed than at any other service, not excepting the mass. Indeed, I think that during the celebration of this latter, many young men endeavor to show their contempt for religious ceremonies, if one may judge by their behavior while in church. They talk all the time, laugh and even criticize

the ceremonies. I have often been tempted myself to follow their example when they scoff at the preachers, because as the clergy unfortunately, are neither upright nor temperate, their admonitions to the purity of customs and the practice of virtue are a continual censure of their own conduct, and often recalled to my mind that saying, "Do what I bid you, and not what you see me practising."

Their sermons besides, are often ridiculous and in bad taste, and finally, many priests urged by the government take advantage of their position to inculcate on the minds of their congregations, in a very crafty manner, the love of despotic ideas and the hatred of liberal institutions. Young men have no other means of protesting against the abuse than mocking, and I, therefore, should not be very severe in my criticism of their behavior.

The appearance of the city on Sundays, is not like that presented by our community in general. The number and noise of carriages is less than on secular days, but markets and stores of several kinds are kept open. In the afternoons, a general merriment and good humor is everywhere manifested.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Promenades in Havana — Interference of the government— Soldiers beating negroes — Expense of keeping a carriage — Fashionable visits— Smoking— Soirées—Balls — *Asaltos* — A chicken
A new Countess

THE place in the city which presents the most lively appearance on Sunday afternoons, is the promenade (*parseo*) of Isabel II, where a military band of music is stationed on Court-days (*días de gala*). It consist of three tracks designed for carriages, of which the middle one is wider than the others, and two walks for pedestrians. They are separated from each other by trees and stone seats, and extend over a mile in length.

On these occasions vehicles proceed slowly one after another, lining both sides of the avenue, so that while those on one side go in one direction, those on the other come in the opposite one. They reach sometimes from the fountain called the "Indian fountain" to the vicinity of the jail, the whole length of the promenade.

Two and sometimes three persons, who are commonly young ladies beautifully, though not expensively dressed, ride in each carriage, saluting with their fans their friends who are returning on the opposite side of the way. The walks on both sides of the principal causeway are crowd-

ed with old and young men, who either walk up or down, or stand still to look at the passing *quitrines*, and sometimes throw flowers or confectionaries to their female friends in the vehicles.

But even in this harmless and inoffensive amusement the government has not failed to show itself, fearing perhaps, that the people would forget for a moment that they were slaves. Whether this, or the desire of mingling in every thing—*cacoëthes gubernandi*—is the true cause, the fact is, that under the pretence of keeping good order, it makes a show of its power there, by the display of armed force, which cannot but imbitter the merriment of those present.

At short distances mounted soldiers are stationed, who, by means of blows with the sword or lance, prevent the drivers from separating from the line, or turning round except at particular places. Very often the driver is seen receiving the blows, while the ladies inside are frightened and in tears at such abusive conduct. In order to enforce the improprieties of those insolent horsemen, a reserve of twelve or more, with a chief at their head, is placed near the Tacon theatre. While every carriage is strictly kept in line, the Captain General freely enters the promenade at full speed with his guard of five pikemen, and passing between the two lines of carriages, receives with a ridiculous gravity the salutations of the people, which he *sometimes* returns in a haughty and almost contemptuous manner.

At five or six o'clock in the afternoon, the carriages are seen leaving the doors of the houses and the livery-stables. Those persons who live within the walls now go outside, and the city is left to a few lonely pedestrians, who stroll through the walk called *Alameda de Paula*. The road called *Calzada del Monte*, as well as *Queen*

street, are then seen crowded with carriages going to the village of Cerro ; and on their return these take one or two turns around the Paseo.

The use of coaches and light wagons has become very general of late years. They formerly were very seldom seen on account of the bad state of the streets, which imparted a shaking motion even to two wheeled vehicles. The expense incurred in keeping a carriage is not great, and hence their abundance. The maintenance of the horse is almost the only item, as all houses have a small stable, and the driver is generally the cook, or acts in some other household capacity. The cost of a good carriage is about five hundred dollars, and that of a common horse, from eighty-five to one hundred and twenty, so that including the harnesses, liveries and other articles, the entire outlay does not exceed eight hundred dollars. The appearance of these vehicles is striking to the eye, on account of the many peculiarities which they possess—the large diameter of their wheels, the great length of the axletrees, the enormous size of the poles, which almost permit another horse to be placed behind the one which draws the wagon, and above all, the circumstance of the driver being mounted on the animal.

After dark, when this ride is completed, the residents outside of the walls, are accustomed to enter the city and ride through a few streets, visit their friends, take ice creams, &c. The ladies, on these latter occasions, observe the same rules as when shopping : the carriage stops at the door of the saloon, and the waiter takes to them what they wish. I think it would be quite a punishment for our ladies to follow the habits observed by those of Havana ; deprived, as the latter are, of many enjoyments. They never enter public buildings ; and I dare say, there is not a single Creole lady who has seen in all her life the

Library of the Economical Society, for instance, in Saint Philip's Convent.

The hour for paying visits among fashionable ladies, is shortly after dark. In the parlors of the one story houses, a double row of arm and rocking-chairs, are placed on both sides of a window, or of a sofa in those of two or three stories. A piece of carpet is sometimes spread on the floor, but covering only a part of it. As soon as one or more ladies make their appearance, the company stand up, and the visitor kisses once on each cheek all her female acquaintances in the circle, receiving the same compliment from them. Then they shake hands with the female strangers, and bow to the gentlemen. If the visitor is a gentleman, the ladies remain in their seats; and only in case he is a relation, or a very old friend of the family, will the matron of the house shake hands with him. When a lady retires, one of the gentlemen present offers his arm, to wait upon her down the stairs, and help her into the carriage, for which trouble she will return a compliment, saying, *muchas gracias* (thank you).

If the gentleman of the house is present, he will probably offer segars to his friends, and they will smoke them in the presence of the ladies, they finding no fault with this, and perhaps do not at all dislike the smoke; for though it is by no means true that all Cuban ladies smoke, as is asserted by many travellers, yet the custom is pretty general. Those who do so, are very careful, concealing the smell effectually, and using only three or four segars in a day, which they smoke when alone in their rooms.

Parties or soirées, as they are called here, after the French name, take place as frequently as among our own people. If there is a piano in the house, and any one is able to play on it, a ball is quickly made up, and when there is a scarcity of gentlemen, the ladies dance with each

other. The Creole dances are commonly resorted to, and I like them all the better, because there are no difficult paces, nor violent postures; they consist almost entirely in walking in different directions.


In fashionable balls, ladies and gentlemen wear all the jewels they have; the former use silk dresses and beautiful head ornaments, and the latter pantaloons and coats of black cloth. The band of music is so numerous on such occasions, that they occupy a large space; but the most shocking feature in the whole affair, is the sight of the regimentals, and the base homage rendered to the Captain General when present. At midnight, a splendid supper (*ambigu*), is served, and ice-creams and sweetmeats are profusely distributed. Opportunities of this kind, are the only ones offered to ladies to display their jewels, as costly dresses and expensive toilets for other occasions are not *à la mode*.

With a view to avoid the great cost of these parties, *asaltos* (surprises), have been invented. Several persons of either sex go to the house of a common friend, who is supposed to be entirely unaware of the plan, and ask him to furnish music for them to dance by. This affair having the appearance of unexpectedness, no sumptuous preparations are made; the duty of inviting all one's acquaintances is avoided; and more than all, the attendance of the authorities is avoided.

As I have not related for some time any of the witty anecdotes from Don Placido's inexhaustible depository, I will here give you one or two on the subject now under discussion. The first occurred at a magnificent ball which took place on board of one of the large three-decked Spanish war vessels lying in the harbor of Havana. The story it will be seen, is very old, as the event happened at a period when Spain had that class of vessels. The

Marquis Duchesne, father of the Admiral, who died a few months ago in this city, was one of the guests. He undertook to carry home with him a roast chicken, which he succeeded in artfully abstracting from the table. He was an exceedingly stingy man, and his wife, who was also known everywhere for her unsurpassed attainments in the exercise of penurious meannesss, advised him to conceal it in his hat. The Marquis was in the act of leaving the ship, when he unhappily stumbled and fell, his hat rolled off on the deck, the chicken issued from it, and was seen by all present, who indulged in loud and prolonged laughter.

The other story is different and more recent. The Countess-dowager of La Reunion, who died a short time ago, bought, together with her title, a complete silver dinner set, and invited all her friends to a sumptuous déjeuner. A lady belonging to one of the old aristocratic families, who had been present on that occasion, some time afterwards invited the new Countess to a similar repast, and in the course of the conversation the latter lady remarked to her hostess that her silver dishes and spoons were not according to the latest fashions. "No wonder," replied the lady, "I have inherited them from my ancestors." This answer was very much applauded in Havana, and this evinces, I believe, the preference given to the old nobility over those newly constituted.



LETTER XXXIX.

What is Aristocracy in Hayana? — Immorality not punished —
Democratic movements — Exciting stories — *Pater est quem
nuptiæ demonstrant* — Easy manner of ascertaining the truthfulness of these stories.

ARISTOCRACY, as the term is understood here, is one of the things which I consider most difficult to explain. If it is defined as proceeding from that old inherited nobility of which I spoke in my last letter, I could cite many instances of people who are generally considered as belonging to that class, but who on the other hand, are designated by public opinion, as having sprung from humble ancestors; so humble indeed, that even mulattoes are counted among them; while the right of ranking with the aristocracy, is denied to some who are descendants from illustrious parents, and who possess the true nomenclature of noble origin.

The same might be said in regard to riches. Many poor families have such exalted ideas, that they will not hesitate to invite to their parties all those persons who, on account of their birth, can contribute to give brilliancy to their circle, but will strenuously refuse to admit wealthy and otherwise respectable people, if they be not considered of a noble origin.

The aristocracy of science, I believe, has never existed, nor are any hopes entertained of its ever being established; and as to that of virtue, my friends think that it will be almost impossible to form it. One of the most powerful reasons they allege, and one which in my opinion is conclusive, is that persons of vicious character are admitted as visitors in the best families, and though an universal cry be raised against the assertion, I believe it, because experience has taught me its truthfulness. I have been obliged to meet in circles which are styled "select," with a man who had failed twice, an occurrence which is here considered as a public swindle—also with a forger, who boasted of his conduct, which fact seemed to prove that he had no fear of incurring any public contempt—also, with a married man, who a few years before had eloped with a female cousin of his—and finally with a Judge who was publicly considered as a robber.

I have also seen in "select society," women who were generally reputed as being of bad character; and what is most singular, is, that many notoriously virtuous mothers, do not hesitate to cultivate their acquaintance, and allow their daughters to visit them. These women are certainly few, and well known, for the generality of Cuban ladies, as I have before remarked, are honorable and pure. Good mothers endeavor, besides, to excite the scorn of their children towards these persons, by censuring their behavior, and many such characters retire voluntarily from intercourse with respectable people, and frequent only the society of those who agree with them in opinion.

I believe, however, that public contempt is a necessary remedy for the amelioration of corrupt morals; but if it be manifested only in private, while the person deserving it is welcome and apparently respected in public,

little effect will be produced. Intercourse with that kind of persons must be entirely suspended; otherwise no hopes can be confidently entertained of that desirable improvement taking place.

The necessary requisite to allow persons to mingle among the aristocracy, according to the general belief, is that their ancestors, on their arrival in the country, should have been distinguished persons (*de viso*); and such a name is either given to a wealthy man, or to a real and well known nobleman, or at least to a person filling a high and important station. If their first appearance was miserable, they will not be considered as aristocrats, no matter what degree of riches, what number of titles, or what important offices they may afterwards obtain.

The leading subject of conversation being commonly the genealogy of persons in any way remarkable, their origin and claims are always looked for and discovered. This opinion seems to be supported by a fact of very frequent occurrence: when the award of any title of nobility is published in the papers, the person in whose favor the distinction has been made, may be assured that in all circles, his origin and the condition of his ancestors are sought after, and if there was among them any Spaniard who came to Cuba poor and obscure, or any person whose claims to a purely Caucasian origin are not well founded, it will become widely known, though ages may have elapsed since the occurrence.

Though well aware of the truth of these facts, I will not alter in the least the opinion set forth in the first paragraph of this letter, and the only satisfactory explanation of the enigma would be, to suppose that all the descendants of those who were once noble, are also noble, though they may have *degenerated*, or fallen from their former rank. Such is the case with illegitimate children of no-

blemen, who are respected everywhere, though their mothers belonged to the lowest grade of the populace.

It is, indeed, exceedingly ridiculous that a person should lay claim to the esteem and consideration of mankind on the ground of the merits of his ancestors, without any regard to his own ; and it is not less so, that another should be called noble from the mere fact of having kept a genealogy which begins with the first of his predecessors who did some good thing, taking for granted that it was good, which is not always the case :—

Le premier qui fut roi, fut un soldat heureux ;
Qui sert bien son pays, n'a pas besoin d'aïeux.

VOLTAIRE.

The above remarks should not lead us to the conclusion that there are no exceptions to such an aristocratical extravagance, which, as you know, is by no means uncommon in our own country. These exceptions are more numerous than at first sight might appear, despite the efforts of the government to promote and encourage divisions of any kind whatever among their subjects. My opinion is grounded on what I have witnessed of various democratical tendencies among the people, which are very prominent, and which might be greatly increased, were that disposition of the government entirely suppressed. This might be done very effectually now, that the new Constitution of Spain acknowledges the principle of equality before the law, because nobility cannot be of any practical advantage.

The matter treated of in this letter, recalls to my mind several stories, which might be styled *thrilling*; but I shall forbear their recital lest my letters should be designated by the same name. From among them, however, one must be related, as it will afford you an opportunity

of becoming acquainted with the existence of a very singular law.

A very handsome woman married about twenty years ago a Spaniard, who not wishing to suffer any longer the effrontery of his unfaithful wife, went back to his native country at the end of three years, leaving behind him two children. His wife has never left the Island, and he never returned; but the number of children is continually increasing; and all, amounting already to half a dozen, bear his name, because, according to the Spanish law,—“*Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant.*”

Among the admirers of this new Ann Boleyn, was a married man, who was indebted to his virtuous wife for his own welfare, and whose life he embittered in return for the benefits received. She was revenged, however, by her rival, who treated her unworthy husband in the most contemptuous manner, so that he sometimes wept like a child, and basely entreated her not to abandon him.

I perceive, that the method which I follow of concealing names, through christian charity, might lead you to doubt the truth of my assertions. You may, nevertheless, test their accuracy by inquiring of any well-informed inhabitant of Havana, who will not only confirm them, but will also probably designate at once the names which I do not publish, except when it seems to me to be necessary.

LETTER XL.

Cuban hospitality—Bad behavior of a Yankee—Sycophants—Modern Pythagoras — Mariano Lassaleta — Eleven years of full board for nothing — Fashionable dinner parties — Enna's knowledge of Geography — O'Donnell's poverty — Breakfasts and dinners.

ON SEVERAL occasions I have spoken to you of the generous Cuban hospitality, which, according to historians, was observed in the aborigines of this Island. Since my arrival in the country, I have been enjoying its pleasant advantages, and the friendly and liberal opposition of Don Antonio, has always prevented me from taking my abode at the hotel, which I intended doing several times, fearing to abuse his kindness.

I dwell upon this matter again, because I want to acquaint you with a fact, which was recently related to me about the procedure of one of our countrymen, whose behavior in remuneration for similar benefits deserves our severest censure. This gentleman comes every year from the States, and stays three or four months at the residence of a Cuban friend, who gives him a well furnished room in his own house, and excellent meals, and devotes a servant to wait exclusively on him, without having ever charged a single farthing, or received from him the smallest present. The Cuban and his lady recently passed on their way to Europe, through the city where his friend

resides in a splendid and comfortable house; and the only service received from him, was being recommended to a hotel where they were lodged, and where they paid in proportion to the length of their stay.

There are in Havana many toad-eaters who abuse this hospitality. Officers from the Peninsula who are not married, do not generally incur any expense for their maintenance. They inquire the whereabouts of several epicurean Creoles whose houses they visit in turn precisely at the time that dinner is served. They accept the invitation which is always given on these occasions; and endeavor to take at one meal as much as they would at three, thus avoiding the expense of breakfast and supper. People of these habits are designated here as men who never make fire in their houses.

Particular mention must be made in this place of a certain Spaniard named Don Fernando de la Serna, who while availing himself of the *Creole* hospitality, had no other end in conversation than that of criticizing the Creoles, and finding fault with every thing in the country. Whenever the head of the family mentioned any of the numberless follies of Spanish customs, he charged him with being an insurgent. He hated all the Spanish-Americans, but was always ready to dine at their tables. This wretch, in order to conceal his coarseness and rough manners, affected the air of a philosopher, professed the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and was very proud when any person called him by the name of that famous philosopher. The Creole who endured this sort of sponging longest, was General Arango, into whose house the philosopher at last fairly removed—being no longer satisfied with taking dinner only—and where he lived, as I have been informed, for many years, without incurring any expense whatever.

Another famous parasite, Don Mariano Lassaleta, will furnish us with some hints on the abuses of the government. Being a married man, he left his wife in Spain, where she lived entirely on remittances sent to her from Cuba. Through the influence of Intendant Pinillos, he was appointed to three or four different offices. The business of one of them, with a salary of four thousand dollars yearly, was to examine the segars exported to Spain, though his total want of knowledge in the matter made him unable to judge of their quality, besides which he did not even smoke. He was also appointed Manager of the Hospital of San Juan de Dios, an office requiring scarcely any other trouble than that of collecting eight per cent. on all the receipts of the Institution, without excluding donations, so that all persons making gifts to the Hospital were sure to contribute that per centage to the benefit of the Manager.

Not being satisfied, however, with this gain, he also forgot to enter in the books many of the payments made to the Hospital; so that when the honest Canon Manuel Mara  n was appointed to the office, he found that his *good* predecessor was a defaulter to a great amount. As Lassaleta had not been required to give any bonds, and possessed no property, the Institution suffered the loss.

Lastly, I know a Spaniard, over eighty years old, who lived at a Creole's, his brother-in-law, with full board for eleven years. He manifested his gratitude to his benefactor by persecuting his sons, who were ruined by costly legal prosecutions and reduced to the greatest poverty. This, he brought about through his influence with the Judges, who being his countrymen readily yielded to his requests, without any regard to their propriety or justice.

Fashionable dinners are generally excellent and sumptuous, as commerce takes care to provide for the tables

every thing which is not the produce of the country. All epicurean improvements and discoveries come directly from France and are known here sooner than in the mother country. Spaniards, therefore, in spite of their earnest desire to prove that every thing in Spain is better than here, have to acknowledge their inferiority in these matters. It is said that General Enna was once astonished on seeing ice at the table of Count Santo Venia, and on being informed that it was brought from the United States, remarked that since Spain was *nearer*, they ought to import it from that quarter.

Their utter ignorance of every thing pertaining to our country is no less remarkable than that manifested by this officer on Geography. A second Chief of the Army, named Castro, speaking once to General Roncali, said that we were only a few miserable whalers. Roncali, then gave him a Spanish book containing a description of the United States, and it was only after reading it that he became acquainted with the fact that we formed a powerful nation.

O'Donnell's wife, who after her return from Havana excited the wonder of even the Queen of Spain for her high-living, landed in the Island poor and miserable. She was greatly surprised, on attending a ball a few days after her arrival, to observe the costliness of the ladies' dresses, while her own garments looked poor and miserable. After two or three months residence, she ordered from France a splendid porcelain dinner set, and endeavored to prove that she had brought it from Spain.

Dinners are generally served at three o'clock in the afternoon; and from twelve to twenty dishes are placed on the table, besides three or four varieties for dessert. Breakfasts are plentiful and present as great a variety of dishes as dinners. It is the custom of many families not

to take any supper ; others take coffee or chocolate only, especially if sweet-meats or ice creams have been served in the early part of the evening, as is very frequently the case. It is generally believed here that suppers are unhealthy, and this is I believe, the chief reason why they are not in general use.

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LETTER XLI.

Weddings — Dispensations — Prohibited marriages — Necessary licences — Curious Spanish laws on marriages — Recent device to abolish slavery and increase the white population of the Island — Rights of Parents — Two barbarous laws — Spanish anthropophagi.

It is rather singular that one of the rules respecting marriages observed in New-York is also followed in Cuba. The bridegroom and bride start from the church where the ceremony is performed, on a trip into the country, where they stay for eight or nine days. At the end of this time they return again to the city and give notice of the marriage to their friends, who immediately go to greet them. The greatest possible secrecy is, however, observed in the performance of the ceremony, which takes place at the time that churches are empty, or leave is obtained from the Bishop to be married at the lady's residence.

The laws of the church forbid marriages with persons of different religious belief, or among near relations. The latter prohibition is, nevertheless, easily surmounted by paying the Bishop, in order to obtain a dispensation, a sum the amount of which increases in proportion to the intimacy of the kindred. These dispensations are not granted, of course, when the persons are great-grandfathers, grandfathers, fathers, sons, great grandsons, &c., of each

other; nor when their kindred is nearer than that of uncle and niece, or vice versa, which is called of the second canonical degree. The prohibition extended formerly to relations of the seventh degree, and though it has been now curtailed to those of the fourth, that is, to those cousins who have the same great-great grandfather, the necessity of obtaining the dispensation very frequently occurs, and a handsome income thereby accrues to the Bishop.

For legitimate marriages the consent of the fathers is required; if these be dead, that of the mothers must be secured. Lastly, that of the paternal or maternal grandfather, of the tutor, and in default of those persons, of the Judge, provided the age of the individuals to be married be under a certain mark, will be sufficient. If they possess any title or belong to the Army or Navy, a royal licence is required. As you are aware, Clergymen and Nuns are not allowed to marry; but widowers, even with children, are permitted to become clergymen.

Among Catholics, the marriage is at the same time a contract and a sacrament; it does not end, therefore, until the death of one of the parties. Complete divorce never takes place, but a temporary separation is sometimes granted, that is so long as the causes which occasioned it are not removed. Whether this system encourages or diminishes morality, I am unable to say. I know of several instances at home, where imaginary and entirely false charges have been brought against a husband or a wife in order to obtain a divorce, and no institution which promotes such frauds, is worthy of imitation. On the other hand, the institution of marriage, when a total divorce is allowed, acquires a temporary character, and I fear that the following words of Gibbon might be applied in that case.

“Passion, interest, or caprice, suggested daily motives for the dissolution of marriage; a word, a sign, a message, a letter, the mandate of a freedman, declared the separation; the most tender of human connexions was degraded to a transient society of profit or pleasure.”

The Bishop or his Vicar are the only Judges in matrimonial matters, as far as they are considered as sacramental; but in all questions about the legitimacy of children, and those relating to the civil law in general, they have no jurisdiction. Hence disputes arise between common and ecclesiastical Judges, who sometimes consider themselves entitled to decide certain suits. This evil is very general also in all the other Courts on account of the innumerable privileges (*fueros*).

Besides the fees collected by the Bishop for granting the aforesaid dispensations, and the share they have in the amount given to the priest who performs the ceremony, he has other perquisites for the dispensation of what are termed *proclamas* or *amonestaciones* (publications of the bans of marriage). Before a marriage can take place, this publication is required to be made in the Parish during three holidays, so that notice may be given when there is any circumstance which should legally prevent the marriage. On the payment, however, of a certain sum, one, two, and even all three of the bans are dispensed with. This is the course pursued in all marriages of fashionable persons.

I consider these dispensations as injurious as those tolerating marriages between near relations. An evil tendency is the remarkable consequence of these latter alliances, and places beyond question their prejudicial effects, as we most frequently find the issue of such marriages either idiotic, imbecile, or of imperfect formation. The secrecy produced by not publishing the bans, has equally

mischievous effects in causing many sad disappointments, and various applications for prohibition have been made too late, when no remedy could be applied, thus facilitating incest or bigamy.

Matrimonial contracts are very seldom made, as the laws have provided beforehand for all the cases that usually occur. As to the property possessed by the married couple, it belongs equally to the husband and the wife, unless one of them brings proof of possessing it when the marriage took place. If the capital of both persons increases, the gain is equally divided between them; but if any losses are experienced, the wife has a right to draw the whole amount of her property, and the residue belongs to the husband or his heirs.

The concurrence of the wife is not requisite for the validity of any agreements which the husband may make, unless they affect her particular property; and he can, therefore, sell a house, for instance, without her consent or even knowledge, provided he acquired it after the marriage.

Though the marriage is considered as a sacrament, it may, nevertheless, be celebrated by proxy, even when the authorization is based on a simple letter. Another peculiarity of the institution is, that it can be accomplished without nuptial benedictions (*velaciones*), that is, without attending at the mass, or any other ceremony except expressing before the Curate and the witnesses their common agreement to become husband and wife, and receiving the benediction of the priest.

Having been told by Don Placido, in one of his speeches after dinner, that he was not aware of the existence of any law conclusively forbidding marriage between white and black people, and several of the company having affirmed that there were really on the Island many Spa-

niards married to negresses, the Filibuster suddenly rose and said in a warm manner, that he had just devised a brilliant system to increase with wonderful rapidity the white population of Cuba, and at the same time to abolish slavery. He developed his plan, which afforded much amusement to all present. Being desirous of gratifying you also, I will here transmit it in a literal translation of his own words :—

“I only want,” said Joseito, “one million dollars yearly to carry my plan into execution, and to accomplish this highly important end. This amount may be pronounced a trifle, if the wealth of the Island be taken into consideration. One quarter of this money should be invested in freeing ten thousand newly born negresses, at twenty-five dollars a piece, which number can hardly be produced in the whole country during that lapse of time. Half a million should be devoted to endow one thousand young and healthy negresses, to enable them to marry white men. It is beyond question, that there would always be a large number of Peninsulars anxious to do it, as their attachment to the blacks is so strong, that almost all the mulattoes are their children; besides which, it would not be easy for them to overlook the inducements of a dowry, which is almighty with them. We would have two hundred and fifty thousand dollars still left, which I would devote to bring out Gallician or Catalanian women. We are well acquainted with their manner of living in their own country subjected to starvation, and not unfrequently having to contend with the pigs for rotten cabbage and other repugnant food, which they ravenously devour to sustain existence, while they work harder than Cuban oxen, and groan under the onerous yoke of privation, misery and misrule. Fifty dollars would enable each of them to buy a suit of clothing, clean themselves, get rid

of the obnoxious animals, and pay their passage to this Island. Giving them two hundred dollars on their arrival, many free negroes may be induced to marry them, if proper attention had been only paid to their bathing and the cleansing of their heads while aboard the vessel. They, on the other hand, have no aversion to such husbands as the blacks, and will therefore be welcomed as their benefactors. If besides all this, the slave trade is entirely suppressed, which cannot happen while Cuba is in the possession of Spain, its whole population, will, in a few years, be entirely composed of white and free people."

Whether this system of Joseito could, or could not be realized, the Cubans are perhaps best able to judge, and to them I leave the question. Meanwhile, I will proceed with my letter, and accomplish my task in accordance with my programme.

Fathers possess almost the same rights which were prescribed by the ancient Roman laws over their legitimate children. The *patria potestas* is not withdrawn from a father on account of his son's having reached the age of twenty-five years; but, on the other hand, he is bound to bequeath to them at least four-fifths of his whole property, unless they have given just cause to be disinherited. All the causes which authorize fathers to adopt this latter course, are very grave, and are minutely designated by the law. A father may, however, bequeath to any particular son or daughter, the third and fifth parts of his whole property, without being obliged to state his reasons for so doing. Parents are thus enabled to reward good deportment, and punish misconduct.

The law does not recognize any other source of paternal authority than marriage. This is the reason why such authority is denied to fathers in relation to their illegiti-

mate children, though they are compelled to furnish them with the necessaries of life, and also to bequeath to them a certain amount of property.

In accordance with the legal principle before mentioned, "the father of a child is the husband of his mother," (*Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant*). The law considers as legitimate sons all those who are born during the marriage, and even after the husband's death, though *ten months* had elapsed since that event. As the law makes no distinction, I believe, that even if the husband has been in a dying state for a long time prior to death, the aforesaid term will not begin to be computed till the very moment of the death.

Don Placido has requested me to take a copy of that law, and to send it to you, translated into English, in order to give you a specimen of Spanish legislation. After perusing it, please tell me what you think of the philosophical reasoning adduced by the lawgiver:—"Because Hippocrates said it."

(*Literal Translation of the Ley 4, tit. 23, partida 4.*)

"Hippocrates was a philosopher in the art of physic, and said that the longest term a pregnant woman can be with child is ten months. Then, if ten months have elapsed since the husband's death, the child which shall come into the world shall be legitimate, and shall be considered as having been begotten by the husband, notwithstanding this circumstance, provided both consorts lived in the same house when the husband died. This philosopher said also, that children born during the seventh month, even on the first day of said month, are perfect, and may live; and such children shall be considered as lawfully begotten by the married parents, provided they were both living under the same roof on the day of con-

ception. The same must be said in regard to those children born in the ninth month, which is the most common term. In case, however, of the event taking place on the first day of the eleventh month after the father's death, the child shall not be considered as his. We have already stated, in the laws of the Sixth Partida of the present book, the manner of watching those women who after their husband's death, state that they are advanced in pregnancy, in order to avoid errors as to the paternity of their children."

My wonder was great on reading this nonsensical law, but Don Placido told me that there were many others still more barbarous. In order to prove it, he turned a few leaves of the same volume, and requested me to take a memorandum of the eighth law, seventeenth titulo, fourth Partida, which substantially says:—

"Whenever a father finds himself reduced to the utmost extremity of hunger, he may sell his own son in order to buy provisions."—But this is not all: the worst part is as follows:—"But if this father, when suffering from hunger, be defending a fortress, he may devour his son before surrendering the castle."—Spaniards say, that their laws are *wise*; but Don Placido, on hearing the assertion is in the habit of exclaiming, "What are they not capable of saying?"

He affirms that Spaniards are *naturally* anthropophagi, and he becomes almost mad whenever any body contradicts him. He quotes in favor of his opinion the above laws, and many others; he adduces the whole history of Spain, principally the siege of Zaragoza, and the fact that certain Spaniards in Florida, devoured their own countrymen. The fact itself is horrid, and there cannot be any doubt that it actually took place. Don Placido put under my eyes and almost compelled me to read these

atrocious deeds in the works of Torquemada, Cabeza de Vaca and Bernal Diaz del Castillo.

I could not refrain from remarking to my friend that it was unfair to impute to a whole Nation the vices of some of its individuals. But he became exceedingly excited and did not seem disposed to acknowledge any exception to the general rule. He strongly opposes everything which may mitigate the charge ; and I am inclined to excuse him, because, in fact, all resentment from the Creoles against the Spaniards must be considered just. It is necessary to live here in order to perceive all the hatred of the Peninsulars against the Cubans, and also to become acquainted with all the wrongs committed on them by the government. What may be considered the most wonderful thing in this Island is that such a general quiet should prevail throughout the people, and that murders of Catalonians and others, should not be heard of every day, or a bloody slaughter of them made by a few dozen of resolute Creoles.

LETTER XLII.

Funerals — Detailed account of the ceremonies — Singularity of several customs — The *velorio* and feast — Brilliant funeral of the Countess of La Reunion — Abuses and flatteries of obituary notices — A new Society having in view the publication of true and impartial biographies — Funerals of Marin, Bermudes and Enna.

THE governors of Cuba being particularly inclined to intrude themselves in all matters, an attempt has recently been made to prevent the exposure of corpses, and the sumptuousness displayed in funerals. Some years ago, a sumptuary law was also published to this effect, but in spite of this, no burial could be effected for an amount less than three hundred dollars, and this sum increased enormously when the least desire of extra display was entertained. It was not a very uncommon occurrence for an undertaker to receive in payment the greater part of a deceased person's property, and so large were their profits, that in many instances they were quite satisfied with receiving only half the amount of their bills. The following was the course pursued :—

As soon as a person dies, an abstract of his will (*cláusula*) is drawn from the archives of the Notary who wrote it. This document states the manner in which the deceased commands his burial to be performed, the amount of several legacies which every testator is *com-*

elled by royal orders to bequeath, and the number of masses he requires to be celebrated in favor of his soul. Another indispensable requisite is to buy the *bula de difuntos*, bull of the departed, which costs three dollars. The object is, I believe, to prevent any person from going out of this world without paying taxes. It is also necessary to obtain a leave from the Curate in order that the corpse may be admitted into the cemetery. This licence is also requisite for the guards stationed at the city gates, who will not permit the hearse to pass without it.

While these preliminary steps are taken, the printing of invitation cards is ordered, and two or three friends are busily engaged in writing the addresses of all those acquaintances *who possess carriages*, because the most important feature of the funeral is to have a large number of vehicles to form a long row.

Wealthy families generally keep for these occasions four or more sets of liveries to dress as many slaves; and if they do not possess so many servants, the undertaker will furnish them. As a great number of liveries are required for ostentation sake, the friends of the deceased are wont to send all they have, and even their own negroes in livery, who are called *zacatecas*. They use a particular garb consisting of breeches tied with small buckles under the knees; a very long cloth coat hanging down to the ankles, trimmed up with an ornamental border, made of a woollen yarn fringe on which heraldic scutcheons are woven; a waistcoat of the same color with the coat, and a three cornered hat with black cockade and tassel. These negroes are expected to carry the coffin on their shoulders to church before it is placed in the hearse, and while the corpse remains at home, they form a kind of guard of honor.

The walls of the parlor or saloon of the house were

formerly covered with black cloth ; but this has been recently forbidden. A high frame made for the purpose, is placed in the parlor and covered with black cloth nicely trimmed and ornamented with four tassels hanging from the corners, and on the top of it the corpse is deposited in the coffin upon three large cushions. Around this monument, twelve candlesticks from six to seven feet high are arranged, holding large wax tapers of about the same height, and between them are disposed smaller ones with proportionate wax candles. All these lights are kept burning day and night until the corpse is taken out. As all the doors and windows are kept open, many are put out by the wind, and the utmost vigilance is required from the undertaker's assistants to keep them lighted, and to prevent a fire.

The female relations of the deceased sit down together in a room whose walls, doors and windows are covered by black curtains. There they receive their friends' compliments, or condolences (*pésame*) during the novenary. Visitors remain about one hour in a profound silence, or speaking in a very low tone of voice with persons sitting near by.

On the night that the corpse lies exposed in the saloon, as it is supposed that the relations do not sleep, many male and female friends remain in the house to accompany them, and form what is named *velorio*. At midnight a supper is served, and were music called in, this would constitute a pleasure party. More than one match has been made upon such occasions. On the following day, before the burial takes place, a good dinner is prepared for almost every person who wishes to attend, no matter whether he be a friend or not, because little ceremony is observed in such cases, and as many individuals, who are not relations of the deceased meet together, a merriment

unbecoming under the circumstances is sometimes perceived.

About twenty-four hours after death, the corpse is taken out of the house. The Curate, accompanied by the priests who have been previously invited and three acolytes, holding in their hands long silver rods surmounted by a cross and wax candles, begin to recite some prayers, after which the procession proceeds to the cemetery. Sometimes they stop at the church to perform the service for the dead. Every priest is allowed a certain fee for his trouble.

Before arriving at the *Campo Santo* (Holy field, or burial ground), the coffin is generally taken out of the hearse at the door of the Asylum called the Beneficencia, and carried to the Chapel, where the mendicant girls sing a responsary which costs seventeen dollars, and affords a pretty income to the Institution. Another responsary is sung at the cemetery, where a small chapel is always open for this purpose. During the recital of prayers, the coffin is lowered to the grave, or put into a niche. No monuments are seen on the sepulchres more ornamental than a marble stone lying horizontally on the grave.

Immediately after the burial, the suite returns to the house of the deceased. The saloon has meanwhile been transformed by the removal of all the funeral apparatus which are then replaced by chairs. The nearest relations of the dead do not join the procession, because they believe it is inconsistent with the grief that they must feel. They remain at home to receive the compliments of those of the suite who return. These come in, take their seats, and after remaining some time in silence, they rise and pass before the relations successively with whom they shake hands on taking their leave.

Some months ago the sumptuous burial of the Countess of La Reunion took place here, when for the first time, I believe, women were seen attending the procession. It was said that those women represented as many poor families who had been supported by the alms of the Countess. The statement is true—Peace be with the dead !

An almost indispensable appendix on the death of any person of distinction, is a long obituary notice published in the newspapers. In these articles, not only are the vices of the deceased passed by without notice, and his good actions highly exaggerated ; but generally some virtues which he never possessed are ascribed to him. Such a course, must, and really does promote criticism and private gossipings, in which the true history of the deceased is related, and every bad action is made public and fully commented upon. Indeed, though christian charity directs us to speak well of the dead, it is nevertheless very difficult sometimes to restrain ourselves from exhibiting indignation at the adulations bestowed on worthless characters, such as swindlers exalted to the pinnacle of honesty, and courtesans to all the admirable qualities of virtue.

In my opinion, charity in such cases, must be fully satisfied with silence. Encomiums on vice are the effects of flattery, and are, moreover, both immoral and unjust, as we must censure it in its various garbs, in order to display the attractive beauties attached to virtue ; for never should the honest be put on a level with the wicked, by uniting them in a common eulogy. I think, on the contrary, that if it were possible to publish on the death of every distinguished personage, a true and impartial account of his good or bad actions, a barrier would be raised to intimidate future wrong-doers, and inspire the virtuous in their

laudatory pursuits ; and this powerful inducement would influence the behavior of many. You will perhaps remark, that such impartiality and truthfulness is not possible ; but I do not consider it so. It is not, indeed, an easy undertaking ; but I think that the immense advantage which might be derived from it, would warrant the labor bestowed on the necessary researches.

In speaking thus, I do not refer to Havana alone. How many men and women have I known in the States, whose invaluable virtues have not been perceived by their contemporaries ! These excellent characters easily hide themselves from view, because modesty is inseparable from true merit. Those who endeavor to show themselves, and assume an exterior of honesty, are generally found trying to conceal some evil design contemplated.

There is a custom in several scientific bodies of Europe, of pronouncing an eulogy on the death of a fellow-member, but I do not know of any in which an *impartial* biography is required. Would it not be possible to establish an association for the purpose of publishing an impartial history of the life of all persons of rank in society ? Would not such an institution exert a powerful influence on both customs and morals ? I think it would ; and though abuses are apt to be committed, and the natural reluctance to condemn the memory of the dead would be an obstacle in the way of finding impartial judges, the usefulness of the association would still be considerable, if it only published those praise-worthy acts which otherwise would have passed unnoticed. Besides this advantage, which may well be considered a great one, we would then, and only then, be able to fulfil those duties which justice requires us to perform.

Several funerals at which the attendance was uncommonly large, have taken place in this city, according to

the statement of my informants; among them, two deserve particular mention, as they were not attended from a desire of gratifying those who issued the invitations, as is frequently the case, but from an attachment and sympathy to the person of the deceased.

One of them was that of the Physician Don Pablo Marin, a man so naturally disinterested and liberal, that he experienced a lively pleasure in attending the poor, from whom he had nothing to expect; and he not only tendered his services gratis, but was also in the habit of giving them money to pay for the medicines he prescribed, and even to procure comfortable sustenance. This will be considered more extraordinary yet, when we reflect that he was far from being rich. Being a person of great ability in his profession, he enjoyed a widely extended reputation, and possessed numerous influential patrons, but nearly the whole of his considerable earnings were devoted to the support of his mother and sisters. He never neglected, however, to afford relief to the poor, and he was delighted whenever he was able to satisfy the wants of the needy. As he was, besides, a very honest man, and a sincere friend, nobody was surprised to see that over five hundred carriages of persons who were under obligations to him, accompanied his body to its resting place.

The other burial alluded to, was that of the distinguished lawyer Don Anacleto Bermudez. He also enjoyed a numerous clientage, which he acquired by means of his talent and learning. The sympathy arising from this circumstance, was greatly increased on account of his notorious republican sentiments. He was, it is said, an ardent patriot, and was even suspected by the government of having taken a very active part in the last revolutionary movement. The Captain General became exceedingly

alarmed on learning that the first carriage had almost reached the cemetery, and the last of the row were still inside the city walls; that over three thousand young gentlemen, elegantly dressed in black, walked uncovered around the coffin; that four of them carried it on their shoulders, contending with each other for the honor of bearing the corpse, not allowing, of course, the negro servants to do it, according to custom.

The Peninsulars were astonished on seeing this spontaneous manifestation of the general feeling. On the death of Enna, their utmost exertions were directed to make, if possible, the most sumptuous funeral that had ever been heard of in Havana. They called at every house inviting persons to attend; they almost compelled all the shopkeepers to close their establishments and dress themselves in a proper manner to form a numerous retinue; but despite of all their efforts, they were forced to acknowledge that Enna's funeral was far from being as brilliant as that of Bermudez, even though the latter was unaccompanied by any display of soldiery.

There was, besides, in the burial of that Spanish General a circumstance not generally known, which formed a striking contrast with the spontaneous zeal which was observed in that of the lawyer. The Arragonese, Enna's countrymen, had agreed to carry the coffin on their shoulders; but as the streets were muddy, they refused to do it when called upon to fulfil their promise, alleging that their clothes would be soiled and become useless.

LETTER XLIII.

Bull-fights — The Alcalde — The *despejo* — How they welcome policemen — Yankee bull — Horrid scene — The death of the bull — Christina's humanity — The famous Pepeillo and the treacherous bull

WE WERE once on the point of seating ourselves at the dinner table, when a noise of bells in the street was heard. On going to the window we saw three horses caparisoned with flags, large and small bells, tassels and ribbons. "There is a bullfight at Regla," said Don Placido to me. "Have you ever seen that barbarity?" "Let us go and see it," answered Joseito. I quickly accepted the invitation, but the old lawyer refused to share with us the *pleasures* of the sport. Our requests, however, were so pressing, that at last we forced him to go with us. We took our dinner hastily, went out, and arrived in season to get good seats.

A few minutes after our arrival, almost every seat was filled, and, of course, at short distances, a sentinel with musket and bayonet was stationed. One of them was afterwards placed near us; Don Placido, on seeing him, rose from his seat and walked away inviting us to follow him. "Let us go and sit as far as possible from that beast," said he, and seeing an empty place on the side where the

sun was shining, he took possession of it ; I did the same, and suffered with pleasure the inconvenience of a warmer temperature in order to avoid the proximity of the representative of despotism.

The circus in which the bullfight was going to take place, was also crowded with people who were walking about, strongly excited. Their excitement was a kind of "rabid joy"—these being the best words I can employ to give you an idea of it—because something like madness might be perceived in every face, especially in those of the Spaniards. The Creoles hardly formed one-tenth of the whole attendance. Very few women were seen, and none of them were natives.

The time appointed to begin the sport had already passed ; the people began to show some impatience ; but the *Alcalde Mayor*, who was to preside over the amusement, had not yet arrived. It is usual for the public officer to come late, in order, I think, to make the people acknowledge that they are worth nothing, or at least that the officer is superior to them. At last, the wished for *Alcalde* arrived. On going into his box, he looked contemptuously all around, evincing a ridiculously majestic gravity. Of course he did not even touch his hat, nor was the slightest indication of courtesy to the people observed. He then spoke to the military officer, who was in command of the troops, and who had approached him to take his orders.

Three or four minutes afterwards, the soldiers made their appearance in the circus to effect the *despejo*, that is, to drive off all the people who filled the arena. They slowly retired to their seats, and the troops, after making the tour of the area to the sound of music, went out through the same gate by which they entered.

Then, a policeman on horseback, all dressed in black,

with a three cornered hat, a small cloak and a staff in his left hand, as an emblem of his authority, made his appearance at a door opposite to the Alcalde's box. Not being a first-rate horseman, he could hardly keep on his saddle and made several laughable contortions to avoid a fall. He went trotting directly through the circus and placed himself under the functionary's box. The reception which that wretch met with is beyond description. From all sides a general cry of mockery and contempt was first heard ; and then hisses, shouts, and some insulting words followed in rapid succession. Several stentorian voices were sometimes heard, amidst the horrible medley, shouting expressions conveying the most profound scorn :—*Alguacil ! Esbirro ! Ladron !* (Policeman ! Thief !)

But the brave officer seemed to acknowledge that he deserved still greater contempt than that manifested towards him, as his face was unalterable, and looked as if he was unconscious of what was passing. He must have lost forever what modesty he might have had when entering the circus, after the scene which was there enacted.

Without showing the least emotion, he went to his post, and took off his hat to receive into its crown the key of the *toril*, a place where the bulls are locked up. It is customary for the Alcalde to throw the key from his seat, but on this occasion, his awkwardness and want of skill was such, that it struck one of the ears of the animal, and fell to the ground. The horse was frightened and jumped ; the rider struggled to keep his seat, which he successfully accomplished after a short while, amidst the loud laughter and shouts of the populace. One of the spectators then went into the circus, and picking up the key, stretched his arm, and gave it to the policeman ; but meanwhile the people began to cry out, " Do not give it to

him!"—"Let him pick it up himself!"—"Alight from the horse, rascal!"—(*No se la des!—Que la coja él!—Apéate, tunante!*)

The merriment of my friends on seeing the insults received by the instrument of the Spanish government, manifested itself by prolonged laughter. They were not the only persons who rejoiced at the scene; everybody, without exception, seemed highly delighted with it, and no pity whatever was evinced for the poor fellow by any of the crowd. The Spanish authorities cannot fail to perceive, that it is not to the policeman, but to themselves, that the scorn of the public was directed. "I am already satisfied," said the Filibuster, "I am glad of having come, because I have enjoyed this sweet pleasure." "So it is with me," added Don Placido: "I am delighted, and consider the entertainment a good one, if there were nothing else to be seen but the ugly grimaces of the Alcalde on hearing the shouts and hisses."

The Alguacil having left the arena, another door was opened, and the whole troupe (*cuadrilla*), of bull-fighters entered the circus. Two horsemen, called *picadores*, entered also: their beasts were very lean, and they were "locked" in saddles with high pannels. The horses had been hoodwinked by means of a handkerchief, in such a manner, that the eye on the side opposite to where the bull was, might be uncovered at the will of the rider. The stirrups were iron boxes larger than the boots, which are of an enormous size. They are strengthened by iron hoops, to protect the legs whenever the horse falls upon the man.

The *picadores* wear slouching, and bear a hard wood pike (*vara*), eleven or twelve feet long, and about two inches in diameter. At the end of the pike is an iron point three inches long, and a kind of ball two inches in

diameter, formed with hempen strings and placed around the point, of which, about an inch remains uncovered. One of the picadores stationed himself about ten paces from the door through which the bull was to enter, and very near the barrier; another placed himself fifteen or twenty paces farther, and in close proximity to the barrier.

The signal was given with a trumpet: all eyes were then directed to the door of the toril. The picadores prepared themselves to receive the attack, by lowering the ends of their lances. When the animal is in the act of leaving the enclosure, a man strikes his haunches with a heavy iron bar, which hips the beast, and makes him almost useless for the fight. In order to make him still less formidable, they give him no food for the twenty-four previous hours, so that when walking into the circus, the animal is almost exhausted. All this is done secretly, but every person is aware of it. In old Spain it would be considered as a crime, and were the bull-fighters to do so there, the people would perhaps, drag them over the ground. As all the bull-fighters in the circus were Spaniards, I am authorized to say, that they are more afraid of the Cuban bulls, than of those of their own country, because they do not dare to fight them without such barbarous advantages.

The entrance of the bull upon the arena is imposing and solemn. The animal darts headlong with bravery and gracefulness. He lowers his head, he lashes his ribs with the tail; he stops for a moment at the outside door; he then raises his arrogant face haughtily and seems to be desirous of beholding the immense crowd which is waiting for him. But this stoppage is so short that it can scarcely be perceived. As soon as he casts a glance on the first horseman, he rushes forward and attacks

the animal. The pike is then driven between his blade-bones, but this rarely checks his impulse ; he applies both his horns to the horse's belly, and thrusting them in, rises him from the ground, and throws him over upon his rider. The picador endeavors to hide himself from the view of his enemy behind the body of the horse, and sometimes forces him to rise the head by pulling the reins. In this emergency other bullfighters, called *capeadores* or *chulillos*, who are on foot, dressed with cloaks of several lively colors, but without arms, do all in their power to attract the attention of the bull in order to extricate the fallen picador from his imminent danger.

They generally succeed. The animal follows one of them ; but in a few moments the chulillo reaches a barrier, jumps over it, or passes through some of the narrow passages which are open at certain distances all around the circus. These passages are scarcely wide enough to allow a person to pass sideways, so that the horns of the bull are prevented from going farther.

Sometimes, however, the animal is so enraged that he disregards his provokers, and goes on revenging himself on the poor horse. He thus becomes more and more furious as if excited by the smell of blood, of which a large pool is soon formed. The horses being easily lifted by the bull, it frequently happens that they are thrown upon the rider, and sometimes roll over him. In these cases the man remains entirely exposed to the fury of the beast, and if the capeadores have not succeeded in the meantime in driving off the bull, he becomes an easy victim.

The first bull we saw looked haughty, and stood upright and proud, but he gave many evident proofs of having been crippled. In order to scoff Americans, the Catalonians called him *the Yankee*, and as he was designated to

be killed, they were satisfied, I suppose, thinking that something Yankee was going to be killed.

Although the animal had been severely hurt before the fight, scarcely two minutes had elapsed after his entrance in the arena, when both picadores were under their horses, and these were so much wounded that portions of their entrails were hanging from their lacerated bodies! What a revolting spectacle! On seeing the fury with which the bull attacked the first horse, I involuntarily shut my eyes, and when I opened them again, all this mischief had been done. The animal, with both horns stained in blood, was chasing a chulillo, and a few men were trying to lift up the picadores and their horses. After accomplishing this, the picadores placed themselves in safety outside the barrier, but the poor horses presented a very sad spectacle. They ran from one side to another, with their entrails hanging, and as they had their eyes covered, they were unable to avoid the bull. One of them suffered such an attack, that he fell dead on the ground in a large pool of blood.

During this disgusting scene the other horse was taken out of the circus; but imagine my wonder and indignation, on seeing that a few moments afterwards, the picador came in again riding on the same animal, whose intestines hung out and almost touched the ground! The second pikeman also came again on a new horse. The first was immediately attacked by the bull with undiminished rage, and almost the same scene was witnessed as before. No diminution was observed in the spirits of the animal, until he assailed the second picador, who was then able to stop him with his pike, and even to keep him away from the horse. After an unsuccessful effort to approach the horse, the bull left him and began to follow the chulillos, some of whom were so frightened that they

ran and fell flat on the outside of the barrier, receiving very hard blows to the great delight of those present, who expressed their joy by piercing cries and loud laughter.

All this happened amidst the most dreadful huzzas. The shouts were also horrid: numerous *bravos!* were addressed to the bull whenever he killed a horse, or threw down a horseman, while the bullfighters were gratified with many injurious imprecations whenever they succeeded in deceiving their enemy by a dexterous and skillful movement. They were very frequently styled *cowards!* *shameless!* by the crowd, and all the sympathies seemed to be on the side of the bull. Some cried out greatly excited, "Had not the brave little bull been crippled, he would have killed twelve horses!" They were not satisfied with the sacrifice of three horses that had been already dispatched.

As soon as the bull showed himself somewhat tired, four men without cloaks, and bearing two *banderillas* each, presented themselves in the circus. The *banderilla* is a wooden stick about a yard long, ornamented with colored paper, and having at one of its ends an iron hook provided with percussion caps and fire-crackers which become ignited and exploded as soon as the *banderilla* is stuck into the animal's neck. The flesh is thereby burnt and torn off, which produces, as you may easily imagine, very acute pains. The noise of the crackers, the smell and smoke of the powder stunned the bull which jumped about and became more furious. There is sometimes great danger in performing this part of the amusement.

When five or six pair of *banderillas* had been stuck, a trumpet sounded, and the *espada* (killer), bearing a large sword and a red flag, made his appearance. He walked

forward and placed himself under the Alcalde's box, took off his cloth cap, and after making a general salutation all around, threw it on the ground. He then stood behind the flag, and as the bull rushed on to make the attack in a straight forward direction, he moved to the left, and the beast passed under the flag. This was repeated, and on the animal making the third onset, he plunged the sword up to the hilt between the two blade-bones. The stroke was so dexterously given, that before the animal had time to proceed farther, he drew out the sword stained with blood, and showing it to the people around, bowed and departed.

Boisterous applauses were then heard from all directions, the enthusiasm of many was converted into frenzy ; and I heard some remark, that they "had never seen a better stab." The bull, however, continued running, but in a few minutes he bent his fore-legs and fell to the ground, bleeding profusely. On seeing that he could not stand up, a man armed with a long dirk approached the back of the animal with the greatest caution, and stuck the knife into the nape so skilfully, that instant death was produced. The populace seemed to pity the animal, and cried vociferously,—“Traitor ! why don't you go before the bull ?” The three horses that we had seen in the street were then brought in, and they dragged the beast out of the circus. The same was done with the dead horses. Some sand was thrown on the blood stains of the arena to prepare it for a second fight.

The next bull, as well as four more that fought on that afternoon, were not so spirited or violent as the first, on account, perhaps, of having been more severely hurt to make them less dangerous. I will mention here two incidents which occurred, although I have already said rather too much on the subject.

A chulillo was assailed by the bull, and while in the act of jumping over the barrier, was caught by his belt, and left hooked to the beast's horns. I turned my face to avoid the bloody scene before me. A quarter of a minute elapsed, and the man was rising from the ground, and the animal was pursuing other chulillos. The bull by the shaking of his head to get rid of the cumbrous weight of his antagonist, broke the belt, and the man being precipitated to the ground, his life was saved in consequence.

Another bull, whose horns were widely separated, attacked one of the fighters, who having no time to escape through the narrow openings of the barrier, was caught between the enclosure and the horns of the animal. When the latter drew back for a second onset, the skilful chulillo did not lose his presence of mind, though his face looked very pale, and rushing to the nearest opening, made a wonderful escape.

During the recesses, the different feats of the performance were criticised, large quantities of fruit were consumed, and smoking continued all the time. Incidents and narrow escapes in former fights were related; and great regret was manifested for the death of Montes, who it is said, was the best bull-fighter Spain ever possessed. He once performed an exceedingly dangerous feat, but the attention of the Queen Mother had been directed to some other object, and she did not see it. She wanted him to perform again this difficult feat, but he refused, saying, that it could not be done a second time without the greatest risk of his life; but the lady insisted, and Montes thought that it was necessary to please her; he considered that his life ought to be sacrificed to his Queen's wishes, without regard to the cruelty and impropriety of her desires. His body was pierced through

by one of the horns of the bull ! Had the people thrown the *good* lady into the circus, they would only have done what was right.

An Andalusian, of very dark complexion, who was near us, said, that he had witnessed the death of the "greatest man in the world." He thus called a *matador* (killer), named Pepeillo, of whom he related the following story. At a bull-fight at Seville, he appeared pale and quivering, and requested the *correjidor* (Mayor or President), to excuse him for not killing the animal. He said, that the beast when attacking, was wont to suddenly change his direction, so that he was afraid to assail him, and that he would certainly be killed if obliged to enter the arena. The Mayor perceiving the man's terror, and believing that he would fall an easy victim, was prompted to grant his request. The crowd, however, in a state of excitement, shouted, "make him kill the bull !" This, with other peremptory expressions and gesticulations obliged Pepeillo to undertake the feat. The bull on making the attack, suddenly turned his head to the right, and the matador fell a corpse. How severe a punishment that crowd of wretches deserved !

LETTER XLIV.

Department of the Catholic Clergy — Consequences of the vow of Chastity — *Capellania*s — Anecdotes — Bad Clergymen — Perjury — Philological disquisition — Honorable Priests — Religious advice — A rectification.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that I had read and heard about the moral character of the Cuban Clergy, a conversation which sprung up between Don Antonio and Don Placido on this matter afforded me much information. After an hour's discussion, their respective opinions, as is usually the case, did not change in the least ; but as they possessed a long experience, a great number of facts and interesting anecdotes were developed in the course of the conversation, and I was furnished with the means of gathering very useful data and accurate information to communicate to you.

They did not endeavor to discover the origin of the prohibition of marriage among Catholic clergymen ; but seemed to take for granted that they were prevented from marrying because the Church had forbidden it. The controversy was on the expediency of the prohibition. Don Antonio considered it expedient and Don Placido thought that it was a source of immorality. The former brought several facts to support his opinion ; but the latter adduced an immense number of instances in favor

of his ideas which were admitted by Don Antonio, and denied also several of his oponent's statements. I concluded, therefore, that the profligacy of the Cuban clergy was a fact beyond question, and that there were very few who could be considered as exceptions.

Don Placido, however, was not satisfied with saying that the evil existed, but affirmed that it necessarily ought to exist, and alleged several reasons to prove his assertion. He said that the vow of chastity, being in contradiction with the laws of nature, it was necessary to break it, as it was not possible for all men to resist those laws, and added "*molestissima omnium affectionum concupiscentia est.*" Don Antonio replied, that such inclinations could be overpowered, and adduced as a proof the fact that many men had done it. His opponent replied by affirming that all the instances quoted were not true, and that those which were, only proved that the persons were, "*a naturâ frigidi.*"

He thought that if the vows were wholly spontaneous and made at the age of fervent passions, there would be more probability of their being fully complied with ; but the true motives in most cases for making such vows are to take possession of the *capellanias*. This institution being not known in our country, I will here offer a brief explanation of it.

Many persons establish a mortgage on a piece of their property, and the interest at the rate of five per cent per annum is paid to a clergyman styled *capellan* (chaplain), who must be a descendant of his, and who must celebrate a certain number of masses every year in favor of his soul. It frequently happens that a person has among his forefathers many founders of *capellanias*, so that a large income is thus formed, and in order to enjoy it, he is obliged to remain a bachelor, to signify his desire of be-

coming a priest. For the purpose of obtaining this revenue, the vows of chastity are pronounced and therefore, these are no longer spontaneous. The effect of this is, that men who have not the least inclination to celibacy swear to observe it, though quite aware that they shall break their oath and become perjurers.

But it is not only the immorality of the unpunished perjury, and the profligate living of those persons whose conduct should be most shining and pure, that are the effects of this institution; many other abuses are derived from it, which are its unavoidable consequences, as I will demonstrate in the sequel.

I know a clergyman who possesses a capellania with a capital of twenty thousand dollars, yielding him one thousand dollars yearly, for which he is obliged to celebrate one mass daily. The possessor of this capellania evidently cannot serve another, because clergymen are forbidden to perform that service oftener than once in a day. He, however, enjoys the interests of several others, which also require masses to be celebrated. How can he manage to serve them all? His friend Don Placido once put this inquiry to him, and he replied that he paid another priest for the masses which he could not celebrate himself. "*Credat Judæus Apella,*" answered Don Placido. As nobody takes the trouble to ascertain whether this is done or not, it can very easily be avoided: and the inducements to do so are very powerful.

A gentleman has also been pointed out to me who possesses several capellanias without being a clergyman. He cannot be deprived of them unless he marries, for though at a certain age they are bound to enter the profession or to lose the capellanias, this rule is not observed; for he is about thirty years old and has never been required to comply with such a law.

Besides, this man has been courting a lady for many years, but fearing to lose his income, declines to marry her. The result may be readily conceived: an immoral alliance. The fact is notorious, but no person cares for it. In order to put a stop to the evil in this case, it would be necessary that some individual having a claim to the *capellania*, should sue him, and run the risks of the decision. This gentleman relying on so considerable an income, has never thought of seeking other resources of revenue, and would become penniless, were he deprived of his *capellania*.

Don Placido was anxious to give me a practical proof of his assertions on this subject, and took me to a clergyman, who enjoyed an undeserved good repute. He was seated very comfortably in a chair (*butaca* or *butaque*), smoking a segar, and wore a gown of the finest cambric, and a pair of slippers. His age was about fifty, and the only distinguishable marks of priesthood were the calotte which covered his head, and a breviary which was lying closed on a chair, and within its leaves his spectacles.

My friend introduced me to him by saying, that I was an heretical Yankee, who wanted to see a Catholic clergyman. The Father looked sharply at me, but quickly turned his face away, as if afraid that I should discover something in his looks. After the mutual interchange of the usual civilities, he made several inquiries as to my creed, and especially on the means we employed to provide for the maintenance of the clergy. He listened attentively to my remarks, and still more so, when I dwelt upon the purity of our ministers and their consistent lives. He then said, without looking at me, that a bad example, was indeed a great evil, and added in Latin: "*Debet Clericus non solum vitare peccatum, sed etiam il-*

lius suspicionem." I did not understand this text on account of his mode of pronunciation, until he repeated it very slowly. This incident brought forth an interesting remark from Don Placido.

In his opinion, the learned men of civilized nations ought to agree on the manner of pronouncing the ancient tongues, so that having adopted a uniform pronunciation for the Latin, for instance, an Englishman and a Spaniard could understand each other, though unable to exchange thoughts in either of their own languages. He said, that though the pronunciation of the Latin had been lost, there were several data from which another might be formed, by coming to an agreement as aforesaid on those points which are either unknown or obscure. He also manifested great surprise on learning, that in the United States the pronunciation of modern Greeks was not adopted; for this language, if not like that of the ancient Greeks in all its details, undoubtedly bore a very close resemblance to it. He also said, that one great advantage of this pronunciation was, that any person knowing it could be understood in Greece at the present time; while those who learned at our colleges could not enjoy the same benefit.

I was then told, that in the University of Havana, the students are taught the same pronunciation which is now used by the Greeks; and in my opinion, the propriety of such a course is evident. I once heard Mr. Anthon, the learned Professor of Greek in Columbia College, (N. Y.), remark, that the *quantity* was thus lost; but even if such was the case, the objection would be small in comparison with the advantages derived from acquiring a *living tongue*; since the ancient Greek may be considered such, by applying to it the modern pronunciation. The present professors undoubtedly would be greatly annoyed in

adopting a new system, but the improvement of education deserves such a sacrifice.

But this disquisition is already too long, and I will therefore return to my interview with the priest. The *Father* had scarcely finished his Latin phrase, saying that "Clergymen ought to avoid not only the sin, but also its appearance," when a boy about five or six years old, whose face bore a great resemblance to that of the priest, entered the room. He sat on his lap in a familiar manner, kissed him, and stretching his hand, took the calotte from his head, and began to play with the small tassel. Don Placido and myself looked at each other and smiled; the Father was rather abashed, and in order to banish all suspicions, "*ad suspicionem vitandam*," he asked the child "What is my name?"—"Tio Panchito," (Uncle Frank), quickly answered the boy. The clergyman then looked at us, as if anxious to add, "You see that he is my nephew."

On going out of *Tio Panchito's* house, my friend the lawyer remarked, "You have already seen a priest, whom Don Antonio considers a saint, and who is really a hypocrite. Let us go and see another who does not conceal his faults, and who may be considered a type representing a larger class of individuals than the one we have just seen: barefacedness is more abundant than hypocrisy."

We went, therefore, to Father Mariano's. His language was truly disgusting; he expressed himself not like a licentious young man, but like a Spanish soldier, which is all that can be said to give an idea of his profaneness. He related to us an incident which had taken place that day. He has a son about twenty-five years old, who had been a competitor for a professorship in the University: some of the Judges, in order to oblige the Father, were exerting their influence over the others, to make them vote for the priest's nephew, a name, which decency oblig-

ed them to give to the competitor, as their mutual kindred was well known. But the priest thinking that such a relationship was not near enough to excite the Judges in his favor, rose and said, "Gentlemen, there is nothing of *nephew* about him; he is my beloved *son*." The Father evincing a great satisfaction at having had recourse to such a device, said to us: "This truth which I uttered, won the victory."

This clergyman was not so particular as most Catholics are; he denied the right of the Popes or Councils to require the vow of chastity from the Priests. "The reason is," said he, "that it is in open contradiction with the divine command of 'Grow and multiply yourselves,' and such a rule has no other support than the following phrases of the New Testament which they do not understand — 'And take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life' (Luke, **xxi**, 34)—No man being a soldier to God, entanglenth himself with wordly business." (Paul, 2 Tim. ii, iv).

The clergyman had scarcely pronounced the last word, when the lawyer replied, that it was very strange that the Father had forgotten two other texts of St. Paul on the subject. A Testament was brought, and Don Placido read verses 32 and 33, Chap. VII, of his first epistle to the Corinthians:—

"But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God."

"But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and he is divided."

A warm and long discussion arose between the two canonists, in the course of which the priest set forth some

principles which were considered heterodox by Don Placido.

I also was inclined to believe that he was almost a Protestant; but this opinion was erroneous, as he, on hearing this remark, declared himself a strong advocate of Catholicism. He said that no person of common sense who had been once a Catholic, could be a *bona fide* Protestant; because many who had professed that religion were considered saints by the Lutheran church; and it being granted that Catholics might enter Heaven, it was hazardous, to say the least, to abandon a well-known course and take a doubtful one. As I am very little acquainted with theological matters, I will let our Doctors answer this argument. On the other hand, the discussion with Don Placido had made our visit very long, and I did not wish to afford an opportunity of making it still longer.

On the following day, Don Antonio having learnt that I had visited several clergymen with Don Placido, requested me to go with him and see some others. I yielded with pleasure to his desire, but made up my mind not to utter a single word on religious matters. We saw, indeed, several priests, whose manners, conversation, and principles were highly creditable to them. They all seemed to be pure and virtuous, and at the same time liberal and cheerful. And it was not without surprise, that I heard the remarks that one of them made at some length, and of which the following is an abstract.

"I would never endeavor to convert people to my religion: I believe that all creeds professed in good faith, ought to be respected, as the human intelligence is not able to decide by itself, which is the true faith. I do not like, therefore, to discuss theological points; and I wonder at seeing honest and religious persons endeavoring to influence the consciences of others. In my opinion, the

only missionaries whose labors are pleasing in the sight of God, are those who work to abolish immoral or cruel worships; but religious services, no matter how improper they may appear to us, are all worthy offerings to God, if they are performed in good faith, and with the aim of worshipping Him."

Before concluding this letter, I will make one remark. An American traveller has stated, that Cuban clergymen sometimes failed to attend mass at the hour appointed, and kept the whole congregation waiting for them, on account of being engaged in cock-fights. The fact, which I first considered an exaggeration, is nevertheless true, though it is not of frequent occurrence. I am also obliged to say, for impartiality sake, that many clergymen are gamblers, and very fond of playing *monte*.

LETTER XLV.

Canons (*Canónigos*).—Friars—Their Property seized by the Spanish government—Nuns—Fanaticism—Anecdotes—Nuns, who became such by Repentance—Others who did it from a natural inclination.

THERE is one class of clergymen called *Canónigos*, who enjoy large salaries, without having to do anything save going to the Cathedral twice a-day to sing in the choir. The hours fixed for this service are very inconvenient, selected perhaps on purpose, to prevent the public from seeing what takes place there. I went, however one afternoon, and saw only three canons among several other persons in the choir. Salaries are now paid to a great number of individuals, who very seldom attend the service. A case has been related to me of a clergyman residing at Madrid, who obtained one of these offices in the Cathedral of Havana, and enjoyed during three years a salary of over five thousand dollars per annum, without having ever left his place of residence.

Some of these offices are acquired by competition; a literary controversy is convened, for the purpose of judging who is the most learned of the competitors. The proceedings are public; but the language used in the examination being Latin, the greater part of the audience are unable to judge of the impartiality of the Judges, who

are thus more free to disregard the merits of the candidates, and yield to other influences. Intrigue in such cases, is almost invariably more powerful than science; and as he who considers himself most unfit for the office, commonly seeks to exert by means of friends, &c., more influence on the judges than others, the situations are frequently awarded to the person least qualified.

As a proof of this, Don Placido informed me, that eighteen lawyers once contended for the office of (*relator*) reporter to the Superior Court, and it was adjudged to one who was almost incapable of reading. It is true, that he was the only Spaniard among the competitors, the other seventeen being all Creoles. A glaring proof of the partiality and incredible barefacedness of the judges is, that among the candidates was the famous reporter Carmona, who had filled the same office with great ability for many years in the Superior Court of Puerto Principe. "This," said Don Placido, "is only a new proof that Spaniards are as ignorant of the meaning of the word *justice* as of *liberty*." "There is no Spanish Judge," he added, "who would not, if allowed to do so, follow the example of a mayor in Peru, of whom a very curious occurrence is narrated:—A merchant, a friend of his, bought a large quantity of spectacles, which he found he could not sell, as the Indians do not lose their sight by old age. He then ordered that no person should be allowed to enter the church unless he had spectacles on. The merchant (See General Miller's work), sold them at a good price."

There are still some Friars, but the admission of novices being prohibited, all religious orders will disappear in a few years. The extinction of these societies has been a great source of revenue to the Spanish government, which, like a bird of prey, has taken possession of

their property, notwithstanding that the greatest part was obtained by donations from private persons. The churches have been converted into stores or barracks, and Captain Generals have never thought of devoting these revenues to the improvement of hospitals, and still less to public education. All these incomes are sent to Spain, where they are divided among the members of the Cabinet, as it is a well known fact that no account of the administration of Cuba is given to the Cortes.

I should not close this letter without saying something concerning the Nuns. I cannot speak of the interior of their convents, nor of their manner of living, as the Physician and the Priest, in extreme cases, are the only persons who are allowed to enter their dwelling. I have not even seen them, and I only heard their voices through screened windows when they sing in chorus upon certain solemn festivals. Public opinion is universally inclined in their favor; and the general belief is, that the most rigid morality is observed in those asylums. These virtuous women bury themselves in the full vigor of life, and devote their time to prayer, without enjoying any other worldly pleasures than making sweetmeats, and a few excellent dishes to be presented to the bishop, or to their confessors and friends, and short visits which their relatives pay them from time to time.

It is a painful spectacle that is presented by a convent of Nuns, as they must be looked upon with pity, considering that they are victims of fanaticism. In my opinion, the privation of those pleasures for whose enjoyments we were created, and which do not in the least injure our fellow-beings, can never be pleasing in the sight of God. Being, as they are, of a virtuous disposition, those women would become good mothers, and contribute in a powerful manner to the happiness of their husbands and chil-

dren, and to the improvement of future generations. Otherwise, they must be considered as trees, which die without having ever yielded any fruit.

Several instances might be quoted in which the sacrifice made by these persons may be considered an act of heroism, performed with eminent self-denial. Such is very frequently the case, and only a few have been prompted to do it by despair. An illusion, inspired by fanaticism, inculcates in their minds the thought that God calls them and wishes them to become His brides; and a feminine vanity makes them desire this title. A dream, a delirium is really what they term a *vocation*. Unfortunate delusion, for which they pay by an enormous sacrifice!

Before taking the vow, the person who intends to become a Nun is required to live one year under the training of the Convent. At the end of this time, she is dressed in the gayest and most sumptuous manner, and taken publicly through the streets. After this tempting trial, she is asked whether she still persevere in her purpose or no. If the answer is in the affirmative, the vows are taken, and she becomes a professed Nun (*Monja profesada*). The world belongs to her no longer: on entering the Convent after the walk, it may be properly said that she enters her grave, because she will never go out of the building again, and even after her death, her remains will be interred in the common tomb, in the yard of the Convent.

The confinement is so rigidly observed, that only in case of a general fire in the building, of an epidemic making its appearance among them, or of a war, are they allowed to leave their dwelling. Communication with the outside is also so effectually prevented that even

women are forbidden to enter the Convent, and only girls of a certain age are admitted for the purpose of receiving instruction.

I have been told that all the Nuns are, or at least have been handsome, and that very few have had recourse to an immortal husband, after despairing of obtaining one among mortals. Instances of dissatisfaction manifested as to their manner of living have been also very seldom seen, and this proves I believe, that their lives within the cloisters are spent in contemplation and study, and entirely devoted to religion ; because, otherwise, it is not easy to imagine how so many women of habits, tastes and educations so widely different, could live peaceably together during their lives.

Among the numberless stories which I might produce on this matter, I will only relate three that are the most interesting. An exceedingly handsome and learned young lady had the misfortune to yield to the inducements of her corrupt and covetous father, and stray from the paths of virtue. Without any inclination to celibacy, she thought that the cloister would be the most severe penalty she could inflict on herself to atone for a fault for which she, perhaps, was less to be blamed than her unworthy progenitor.

Another promising young lady, thought that she had been inspired by God ; that she had seen Him in a dream, and that He had told her to become a Nun. All possible efforts were made to convince her that there was no reality about her dream, and that it was the effect of fancy ; but they were of no avail. Finally, she devoted herself so intensely to the preparatory studies, that she began to suffer severely with toothache, and her Latin lessons were necessarily delayed. Wishing to overcome this obstacle, which hindered the attainment of her end, she had all her

teeth drawn out, though none of them were in bad condition. The most singular feature of the case was, that they all grew again, which occurrence was considered a miracle.

It is necessary to have a dowry in order to be admitted into a convent; and the amount required in some of them, is three thousand dollars. This money is never returned, even in case the Nun should die a few days after having entered the cloister. In this manner, many, if not all these institutions have amassed an immense capital, which will at some future day become a prey to Spanish rapacity. A very handsome young lady, of a gay and amiable disposition, the daughter of a poor military man, once manifested to her parents and friends a sudden resolution to become a Nun, and requested their aid to make up the dowry, which she could not afford to pay. The success of this undertaking was very doubtful, as many wealthy persons, who if willing, might have contributed largely to form the dowry, did not wish to facilitate such a sacrifice. It was also rumored, that she had not a true vocation, and that she had resorted to that desperate measure, because her affection towards a very respectable and wealthy gentleman, did not meet with a suitable return. The obstacles in her way were almost insurmountable, but this only caused her resolution to become stronger still. She therefore went to see several rich ladies, in order to procure the required amount; some promised to contribute, but these promises were not obtained until after long and warm discussions, as all persons on seeing the sacrifice that she was going to make, endeavored by all means in their power to dissuade her. The gentleman before alluded to, who had never suspected that he was, as was said, the object of the young lady's affection, having learned what was passing, went

in haste, to offer her with pleasure his heart and hand, an act which was highly extolled, and strongly recommended by all her friends, evincing thus in an uncontrovertible manner how unfounded were the rumors that had been divulged in regard to her. Her acquaintances and relatives on seeing such proof of her perfect vocation, soon completed the necessary sum, and she took the vows in so solemn and fervent manner that all those who witnessed the ceremony were highly gratified.

LETTER XLVI.

Public Instruction — Primary Schools — The Female Teacher of the Crumb (*Miga.*) — Ituarte's and Navarro's Institutes — A learned Habanero — Want of Inducements for Learning — Spanish System of Stenography — Seminary of St. Charles — Royal University — Schools for Colored People — Great Puffing of Teachers — Anecdotes.

THOUGH something about public instruction has been already said in my letters, I think that a great void would be found in them, if they did not enter more minutely upon the consideration of this truly important matter. On looking over the works written on Cuba by foreigners, I find that in none of them has this subject been treated, and this also encourages me to carry out my views more confidently.

If we first direct our attention to Primary Schools, we may properly say, that there is not a single one in the whole Island which can afford the benefits of gratuitous instruction. There are, indeed some, very few, where no compensation is required from scholars; but they are supported either by the parents, or by some liberal and generous residents, who have not only to defray the expenses, but also to overcome the obstacles thrown in their way by the authorities. Under more or less trifling pretexts,

every officer opposes the formation of new schools, and endeavors to have a direct concern in the management of those already established. Their aim, to say the truth, is to hold the sole control over these Institutes.

Even in times when the Corporation styled the "Patriotic Society," was truly protected by the government, which then wished to gratify the Cubans, fearing that otherwise they would follow the example of their brethren of South America, there were in the whole city of Havana and its neighborhood only thirty-three schools. The number of scholars attending each, did not amount to thousands, as is the case with those of New York; and the aggregate number of children receiving instruction in all of them, was eight hundred and seventeen. The appropriations for some of these schools amounted only to ten dollars per month.

The tuition in these establishments is confined to reading, writing, the four fundamental operations of arithmetic—few getting any knowledge of fractions and the principles of the christian faith. These several branches are badly taught, and acquired in a very imperfect manner. I have witnessed an examination in one of these schools, and saw there a proceeding which particularly attracted my attention. One of the exercises consisted in testing the boys' knowledge in orthography by requiring him to write what the teacher dictated from a book. The scholars were seated on three benches, two of which were placed lengthwise, and one across, and the teacher stood at one of the ends. As soon as he pronounced the word that had to be written, for instance, "*hombre*," he started and passed swiftly by the benches, saying to the boys in a very low tone of voice, which the bystanders could not hear "with an *h* and a *b*;" with this help it was scarcely possible to make a single mistake.

I have also seen several schools for girls, which are called *Migas* (Crumbs), where besides the branches already referred to, they are taught to sew, and perform embroidery and other needle work. I entered one of them, accompanied by the Fillibuster, who was with me most of the time; we there saw the female teacher, with her dress loose, and smoking a large segar, which she threw away as soon as we made our appearance. We hastened to leave the school, regretting to have occasioned the woman such trouble. None of the girls had reached the age of ten; some were only four, or even three years old; and the only object in sending them to school, appeared to be that of keeping them still, or to free their mothers from their annoying play.

There are some schools on a larger scale; and several other branches of education besides those already mentioned, are taught in them, though generally in a very imperfect manner. One of these Institutes, kept by Don Ramon Ituarte, seemed to me a well conducted establishment. I witnessed the examination of an advanced class in Spanish grammar, and the boys appeared to be well acquainted not only with it, but also with the principles of general grammar. I also have had occasion to see his gymnasium, and was much pleased with the carefulness of the teacher in avoiding accidents, as well as with his friendly manner towards the children.

The amount paid monthly by each day-scholar is, from four to ten dollars, according to the branches he learns.

The schools are closed on Thursdays, Sundays, and all holidays. The school hours are from nine in the morning to two in the afternoon; and from 4 P. M. until dark. Examinations take place once in the year.

The name of *college* is given to several Institutes, in which many branches of secondary education purports to

be taught in conjunction with others of primary instruction. The greater part of the pupils board in the Institute. One of the oldest and best managed establishments of this kind, is that known by the name of San Cristobal, whose director Don Rafael Navarro, is a person distinguished by his virtues, learning, and great kindness towards the children. It is situated in the open country, on the brow of the hill where the fortress *Castillo del Príncipe* stands. The building is very large, and each pupil has a small room to himself. The charges are about thirty dollars per month.

There is another college of this kind, whose director is, like the above, a native of Havana. His extensive learning entitles him to be considered one of the *savants* of our age, and he would undoubtedly have acquired this reputation long ago, had he lived in any other country than Cuba. He is not so much known as he deserves to be, but does not wish to abandon his present retirement. I talked with him one evening in our language, with which he is thoroughly conversant, as well as with other modern tongues, and Latin of course. He possesses an excellent memory, and is master of a great many branches of science. He has not published any work, that I know of, except some articles in the newspapers many years ago, and an excellent translation of Volney's Travels. Strange as this might appear, it is not surprising in a country like this, where he would soon have incurred the suspicions of the government, even though his writings might have been entirely unconnected with politics. His opinions on this matter are unknown to me, our conversation having been wholly confined to literature, and on his travels through the United States and Europe.

The other Institutions of this class, which have come under my inspection, might be properly designated by

the name of "Money making enterprises," instead of seminaries of learning. A great many parents, unfortunately, send their sons to receive instruction in them, as their chief object is not that they should acquire *knowledge*, but that they should *gain courses*, as they say here; that is, be promoted from the lower to the higher classes, and at last get a diploma, and follow a profession. Such must necessarily be the case in a country where extensive learning is of no practical advantage, but only serves to excite envy and jealousy from others, and suspicions from the government officers.

In order to make these college speculations more profitable, the number of teachers must be as small as possible, and their salaries as low as they can be made. This principle, which is easily understood by the dullest person is never lost sight of, and fully carried out by the school speculators. A single professor in some of these colleges, has charge of six different classes; and some teachers consider the full board which they receive at the college a fair remuneration for their services. Keeping these facts in view, a pretty accurate idea may be formed of the instruction that pupils receive in such establishments.

The parents, nevertheless, see that they are afterwards approved by the University; that they are promoted to higher classes, and this is all they desire. The diploma of physician or lawyer is obtained, and this is considered sufficient. It is but natural to presume, that if this diploma is not accompanied by sound learning and ability, it will be of no use; but such not being the case, an explanation must be offered of how, without knowledge, a good reputation is obtained, or at least success, which is what is generally looked for.

If the scholar is about becoming a physician, he is sent

to Paris for two or three years, for the avowed purpose of receiving the last finish. He either studies or spends his time in amusements, and his parents in Cuba, meanwhile, speak continually about the wonderful progress he has made, the premiums he has won, and the eulogies which his professors bestow on his abilities and talents. If he is intended to follow the legal profession, it is not learning that is required so much as a crafty and cunning disposition, with a large dose of submissiveness to flatter the government officers and the Judges of the Audiencia. Nothing is a source of greater gratification to these magistrates, than the spectacle of a lawyer humbling himself before them. I have been told, that a very stupid and foolish lawyer, has amassed a fortune by acting in the capacity of a menial to all the regents of the Audiencia who have accepted his services. I have been informed also, that these officers become highly incensed whenever they see a lawyer riding in his own carriage; and it is said that one of them called Salas, who had been one of the founders of the aforesaid Court, used to say, that lawyers ought always to go on foot, with their papers under their arms, as he had seen them in Spain even on the highways.

In one of the first class colleges, I saw some exercises in short-hand writing, and inquired about the system followed here, in order to judge of its merits, when compared with that generally used in the United States. There are, indeed, many great dissimilarities, the most considerable is, that they do not write sounds, but letters. The vowels are not marked with dots, but have particular signs; and they use terminations, but not prefixes, and make no distinction between heavy and light lines. None of the pupils could write with any considerable rapidity; and according to what I have read in a modern

Spanish work on "Eloquence," four writers using this system, were hardly sufficient to record the speeches of the members of Congress at Madrid. If this be the case, the superiority of our system is evident, for a single reporter of any of our newspapers retires sometimes at eleven or twelve o'clock at night from a public meeting, and at seven o'clock the following morning, the subscribers may read already printed, a faithful report of the speeches delivered on the occasion.

I have already spoken of the college that has been recently opened under the direction of the Jesuits, with the well understood design of checking the progress of republican ideas, and of implanting in the hearts of the rising generation a base and slavish submission to tyranny. This difficult undertaking, I hope, will prove unsuccessful despite the efforts of the government.

A gratuitous school of drawing was founded many years ago, in connection with a class in theoretical and practical machinery. A thorough reorganization of the school has lately taken place; and many other branches of civil engineering have been added. There is also an old school for Navigation, on the other side of the bay, in the suburb called Regla; but from causes unknown to me, the number of attendants are limited. It would not be surprising to learn, that the professors, as it is rumored, are unfit for the office, as the Spanish government would thus be acting consistently with its principle of appointing to all offices the persons least worthy to fill them.

Among the literary establishments of some importance in Havana, we may mention the Seminary of St. Charles and the University. No reference will here be made to the Seminary of Santiago de Cuba, for want of data. The Seminary of St. Charles was founded in 1774. A

fixed number of young men destined for the ecclesiastical profession are instructed gratuitously in it; but not one half of them finally take the vows. The tuition is confined to Latin, several branches of Natural Philosophy, and Theology. They are furnished with rooms and full board by the Institution, which is supported with the interest yielded by mortgages which it possesses, amounting to a considerable sum. There are only a few professors, but their salaries and perquisites are large. The director at present is a canon, and he enjoys, therefore, two large salaries, besides full board, which is furnished by the seminary.

The University was founded in 1728, and reorganized in 1842, when an entirely new system of instruction was adopted. It is only designed for the tuition of those who intend to follow the legal or medical profession, and is chiefly supported by the instalments paid by the scholars. It possesses a small cabinet of Physics, a chemical Laboratory, a collection of objects for the study of Natural History, and a small Library. It has over thirty professors receiving pretty good salaries. The study of Law has been lately modified and improved, as it was previously pursued in a very careless and imperfect manner. In regard to Medicine, some improvements have also been made. A dissection room was established, and also a class in Anatomy a few years ago, both which requisites to a complete course, were before wanting.

The study of Botany, began in the year 1825, but the professor appointed was utterly ignorant of the science he was required to teach. The most striking feature of the case is, that he has been teaching only a few years, and has enjoyed for over twenty years a salary of two thousand dollars per annum, without attending to his class. The establishment of a class in chemistry, is still

more recent, and there are many physicians who are not acquainted with this science. I do not mean to say, however, that if they were well instructed in these branches, the mortality among their patients would be less; for many persons believe, and my own opinion on this matter does not differ much from theirs, that he who knows the most of this uncertain science, is frequently the person who least studies it. In adducing the above facts, it is only my purpose to enable you to judge of the interest taken here in the instruction of youth in the several branches, and thus carry out the purpose of this letter.

The spectacle presented by a school of mulattoes and negroes, has been a source of no little surprise to me. There are many for boys and girls indiscriminately, and the average attendance at each, is from twenty to thirty. The instruction imparted in them is exceedingly scanty, and in some it is confined to the teaching of religious prayers. Some of these schools were once supported by the "Patriotic Society;" but this Institution is now on the decline. The Spanish government does not like the epithet "Patriotic," and secretly endeavors to sink it into nothingness. A portion of the Board of Managers some years ago, zealously promoted the improvement of public education; but it seems that the greater part of the inhabitants are not fully aware of its paramount importance. The most considerable efforts ever made, have not been certainly, of any great consequence; and the great praises and exaggerated eulogies bestowed on their authors or promoters, cannot be looked upon but as undeserved. No large donation like those of Cooper, Astor, &c., have ever been made, as far as I know, for the establishment of educational Institutes: however, this is not to be wondered at, as the government assumes the management of all the funds devoted to the public good;

and few persons are willing to exclude their heirs from a property which, after all, will not be employed for the purposes designated by them.

One of the means employed to promote competition among the directors of schools, was to publish in the newspapers the reports given by the persons appointed to preside over the examinations, who, in accordance with the Spanish custom, were commonly those least fit for the charge. This would undoubtedly have exerted a beneficial influence on education, if the most rigid impartiality could have been observed in the reports, and great care taken of their correctness ; but such was not the case. The rhetorical resources of the language were put to the test, in order to produce the greatest possible puffs, and long articles appeared in the papers, in which the merits of the professors, and the wonderful progress of the pupils were greatly extolled. The writers of these documents, were at last found to be the same professors whom they so much praised, as the Judges were frequently incapable of writing them. The parents, however, soon perceived that their sons, who were represented in the reports as learned, were very ignorant, and these false promulgations soon received their merited contempt.

Those who possessed true excellence, were jumbled in a common eulogy with the most ignorant and least gifted, and this injustice is still practised by the professors of the University in their awards of the title of excellence, (*sobresaliente*).

If the student belongs to an influential family, and answers in a satisfactory manner two or three questions during the examinations, he readily obtains the title *surpassing*. Sometimes *all* the pupils forming a class, are favored with this distinction : and it would be but natural to ask, whom do they surpass ?

I witnessed once the examinations in the University, and the following incident occurred, which I think is worth relating. One of the boys made a short sketch of Columbus' first voyage, and the Rector or President, who is always a Spaniard, inquired of him, who in his opinion, had shown the most courage, Columbus or his followers. The scholar well knew that the latter intended to oblige their leader to return to Spain, fearing to meet with a watery grave; but considering that the great navigator was a Genoese, and that the others were countrymen of the inquirer, he thought it more for his interest to answer, "The Spaniards." The Rector, elated with joy, cried out, "Bravo!" and this reply gained for him, I believe, the mark of "surpassing."

I cannot refrain from translating in this place a paragraph from a pamphlet in Spanish, published in New York two or three years ago, which you may have not read, and which I think will be found very suitable to illustrate the subject under consideration.

"The discovery of the New World, is one of the feats most extolled by the Spaniards; but history teaches us, that if their vessels reached the *American Islands* before those of other nations, it was in spite of the efforts of the Spaniards, who followed the illustrious Genoese, and who in their villany and cowardice, intended to compel him to return, and threatened to throw him overboard. And if this crime was not perpetrated, it was on account of a *greater fear*, as they were utterly ignorant of the art of navigation, and could not have returned without the assistance of the great discoverer. If Columbus had not been accustomed to despise the Spanish boasting, or if he had feared their threats, there can be no doubt that the discovery would have been made by other nations, as he would have returned to Spain without effecting it."

This fact will prove also the correctness of the following remark made in one of my former letters. "Spaniards fortunately for their pride, forget all these historical particulars, which tend to impair in the least the glory of their nation."

LETTER XLVII.

“Economical Society,”—Its Seal—Object—Evil and good produced by the Institution—Apparent increase of the White Population—The Secretary—The four per cent. Tax—Anecdote—Dissembled Demonstrations—Charitable Institutions—Abuses—Don Mariano Arango—Jail—Dungeons, (*Bartolinas*).

IN THE early part of the year 1793, the “Economical Society of the Friends of the Country,” was founded on the principles of other corporations of the same kind established at Santiago de Cuba, and Madrid; but its true name was seldom given to it, and it has been generally called “Patriotic Society,” until that epithet has been considered too revolutionary, and but few Creoles dare to use it now.

The Seal adopted by this Society represents three castles, emblematic of the city, accompanied with this motto, “*Regi et Patriæ.*” The king is therefore placed before the country, a principle fully in accordance with the maxim of despots. The motto was proposed by the founders of the Institution, who thus evinced a submissiveness, which their brethren of Santiago de Cuba had not committed, as their motto is, “*Surge et Age.*” The latter seems also to be more suitable for a society whose object is to promote the public interest through the zeal and perseverance of its members.

The purposes of the Society were, to "promote agriculture and *commerce*, the breeding of cattle, the industry of the country in general, and as occasion offered, the education and instruction of youth." These words are quoted from the first article of the petition published by those *patriots*, asking the king to approve the plan, and by-laws of the Institution. It will be perceived, that in this instance also, public instruction is the last of the purposes of the Society; besides, being attended to "only when it should be considered convenient:" as the meaning of the Spanish adverb *oportunamente*, clearly points out. Accordingly, the section of the Board on whom this part of the programme devolved, did not begin its labors until the year 1816. The supreme government at Madrid, did not approve that the Society should endeavor to *promote commerce*, and declared that this must be done only in accordance with the existing regulations on the subject: that is, that it should confine itself to the promotion of *inland commerce*.

The government was also careful in ordering, that the sessions should take place under the supervision of the government officer, who should also act as president; and that the essays, or other writings of the members, should not be published without having been previously examined and approved by the censors.

This Institution is represented by some, as a source from which great advantages have accrued to the country, while many others deny the assertion, and consider the progress of the Island as the effect of its geographical position, and other favorable circumstances in that period. Others still believe, that it has been mischievous in its results, not only on account of the erroneous ideas of its chief members on Political Economy, but also, because, actuated by the desire of increasing their planta-

tions, they have uniformly and eagerly encouraged the importation of African slaves, the future enemies of the country, and totally neglected a more useful emigration, that of white settlers, which would have been a great and increasing benefit to the country. This latter opinion, seems to me to be the most reasonable.

Some will, perhaps argue, that great efforts have been made to promote the immigration of white people, and will adduce as a proof, the existence of several royal decrees and regulations, having this end in view; but this argument may be very satisfactorily answered. The first requisite demanded of the settlers, is that they should profess the Catholic creed; and the exercise of all other forms of religion are rigidly forbidden. This alone, excludes at once a large number of immigrants. Then if any wish to leave the country before residing there five years, they have to pay to the Exchequer ten per cent. of all the property they have acquired; and this per centage increases to fifteen, when they have been over five years in the country.

In those decrees and regulations, much indeed, is said about protection, &c.; but the few foreigners who have taken up their abode here, experience every day the fallacy of such offers and promises, and find that there is personal safety nowhere in Cuba, and that property is wholly unprotected. Such being the case with the natives, it is reasonable to expect that foreigners should be still in a more precarious position.

No lands were offered to the immigrants, nor small advances or loans to provide for their maintenance, from their landing until they could get situations or sell the agricultural products which they might raise. Several efforts were indeed made to afford these facilities, but they were never carried out, as the funds devoted to this

purpose, were scarcely sufficient to pay the Secretary's salary, amounting to one hundred dollars per month, though he had no duties to perform. The branch of the Institution which encouraged immigration, was supported by a duty tax of six dollars, collected from each African negro imported ; as at that time the slave trade was authorized. The evil inflicted on the country by this trade, was then enhanced by some slight advantages ; but after the trade was suppressed in theory, and continued in practice, the benefit to the country ceased entirely, and the Captain Generals' pockets soon became the reservoir of the accruing advantages. The immigration branch of the Association being left without income, and the Secretary not feeling disposed to lose his pittance, a person, whose name I have not been able to learn, devised a plan to supply the Institution with funds, by imposing a tax of four per cent. on the fees of lawyers, attorneys and notaries public. This exaction did not extend to physicians ; and as the Secretary belonged to this profession, there is some reason to believe that he was the author of the motion.

In order that an idea may be formed of the facility with which taxes are imposed here, I will prolong the subject. The Board fully concurred in the expediency of this device on the eleventh of February, 1832, and since that moment the collection of the tax was ordered by the government, and carried into effect without waiting for the approval of the Cabinet at Madrid. This is proved by the fact, that a statement was published in the official papers at the time, showing that this item had yielded seventy-five thousand one hundred and sixteen dollars, from February 1832 until the end of the year 1835. In regard to the approval, I am informed that it has not arrived yet. Before closing this subject, I have

only to add, that the government finally took possession even of this four per cent., and devoted it to pay the salaries of the Judges of the Superior Court. The slightest shadow of the famous "Fund for Promoting the Immigration of White Settlers," was thus dispelled; and it is not impossible that the death of the Secretary, which occurred shortly afterwards, was produced by the grief of seeing the entire abandonment of the plans for *increasing* the white population, which had so much *increased* his private fortune.

The "Patriotic Society" has produced also many evils, which its warmest partizans will not dare to deny. The government has often used its members as mere tools for concealing its enormities; and by means of its influence individually exerted on many of them, compels the whole Board to yield to its desires, thus giving a *thin coat of legal varnish*, as it has been properly called, to acts of the most flagrant despotism. This is clearly deduced from the fact, that the government in order to support many of its tyrannical regulations, has endeavored to extend the objects of the Society to subjects which were not within the scope of its fundamental principles. This is the cause of a phenomenon which cannot take place in free countries, but is often observed here. Reports or memorials are sometimes seen, signed by several persons, who, in their private conversations, utter opinions in open contradiction with these set forth in those papers, and even mock and laugh at the documents.

Hence the reason why congratulations, illuminations, or even contributions, and offers of lives and property from the inhabitants to the government, cannot be considered as proofs of attachment. If a person, in order to flatter a government officer, endeavors to do anything in his favor by a general subscription, even to present a

walking cane to him, nobody dares refuse to contribute for the purchase of the article, fearing to be considered as averse to the government, or as an *insurgent*. This is also the only clue that has been found to the fact, that Señor Concha has been able to obtain sufficient subscriptions to the capital of the Bank recently opened in Havana. He only had to point out, that the enterprize had the political object of strengthening the dependence of the Colony upon the Mother Country; the Spaniards promptly tendered their assistance to carry out this *patriotic* undertaking; and the Creoles fearing to incur the suspicions of the government, purchased more stock than their means would justify.

Such occurrences are frequently transpiring, however incredible such pusillanimity may appear. I know a Creole who did not place lights in the front of his house, as was generally done, when the news that Lopez had been made prisoner was received at the Capital: all his neighbors were Catalonians, and on seeing his strange behavior, inquired from him the cause; he answered that he had no curtains and no candlesticks for the lights, whereupon they sent him everything needed, and furnished even the candles.

One of the objects of the "Economical Society," was to promote the study and discussion of all questions of paramount importance to the welfare of the Island. It offered rewards to the author of the best essay on every subject presented for discussion; but the payment was never effected, and great injustice was often committed in the awards. Several competitors entered the field at first to contend for the prizes, but having been disappointed, they retired forever from the arena. Such a result was to be expected, as the public are not easily deceived. If the awards to these essays had been made by learned

and rigidly impartial judges, the want of pecuniary rewards would not have prevented the enlistment of competitors, as the encomiums in that case would have been looked upon as deserved ; but these requisites not being attended to, the awards were not and could not be considered as a proof of real merit, but as the consequence of the efforts of influential friends, or as the effect of the superior craft of the triumphant author.

Several persons belonging to the "Economical Society," have indeed zealously urged the establishment of charitable institutions. Among those founded by them, we may mention the "Charitable House," (*Casa de Beneficencia*), the "Foundling Asylum," (*Casa Cuna*), and the "Insane Asylum," (*Casa de Locos*). Their incomes are comparatively small; they are managed in a very careless manner; and the numerous abuses of the directors, swell the expenses to an enormous sum, so that the number of persons enjoying the benefits afforded by the Institutions are necessarily small. The wives of O'Donnell and Roncali well knew how to turn the work of the girls in the Charitable House to their own advantage. They ordered them to sew and embroider so large a quantity of bedding, that it is generally believed that their purpose was to make presents, or to sell them in Spain.

The Foundling Asylum was founded for the purpose of bringing up children left by their mothers at the doors of the buildings, either on account of not having the means of supporting them, or from not wishing to recognize them as their children. The usefulness of such an Asylum has been questioned by many; some consider it as rather immoral. A highly virtuous clergyman, Don Mariano Arango, devoted the latter part of his life to promote the interests of this Institution, with a zeal and disinterestedness worthy of the greatest praise.

Persons like this honorable priest, are unfortunately seldom met with, and the common practice with people under such circumstances, is to take advantage of every available opportunity of speculating with the funds of the Institutions under their care, and to appropriate to themselves as much of them as possible. This speculating spirit extends sometimes even to the quality of the food and medicines administered, to the great annoyance and discomfort of the inmates. I have been in the halls of San Juan de Dios Hospital, and could not stand the bad smell which one encounters in them. The meals also were of an inferior quality, and exhaled a rather unpleasant odor. An inquiry having been made by the government into the proceedings of the directors of San Lazaro Hospital, the most disgraceful abuses came to light.

The Jail of Havana, erected during the administration of General Tacon, is a building covering a large area, but the yard, as is almost invariably the case here, occupies more ground than the superstructure. Ventilation, however, has been so much disregarded, that a nauseous smell is felt at once on entering the building. The second story is not quite so offensive, and is devoted to the lodging of troops. The dungeons (*bartolinas*), of which so much has been said, may be considered with propriety, as real graves, on account of their darkness, dampness, and filthiness. Numberless hungry rats, of an enormous size have taken their abode in them; and the unhappy prisoners, who for any cause are lodged in these dungeons to avoid all intercourse with other people, can do nothing but to repel the attempts of these animals to devour their feet. The *pleasure* which Spaniards experience in torturing people, is clearly evinced by the use they make of these dungeons. It is not necessary that a man should have been previously declared guilty, to

throw him into these prisons ; the mere belief that it may be convenient to conceal his evidence from the other prisoners' knowledge is sufficient. Many, after fifteen or twenty days' confinement and sufferings, are declared not guilty ; and those who do not die from the consequences, have their health so much impaired, that they retain the most painful recollections of their imprisonment during the remainder of their lives.

LETTER XLVIII.

Cuban Literature—Regulations of the Press—Their Defects—Censorship—Abuses committed by the Censors—Cuban Apathy—Bimonthly Review—Other Publications—Poets—Cuban Academy of Literature—Obstacles—Written Legal Reports—Anecdotes.

SOME writers entertain the belief that literature does not exist in Cuba, and consider it a very strange occurrence; but in my opinion, what is most to be wondered at, is, that there should exist even the little that remains, or that a single individual would be found willing to write. I have read with surprise a book written by a Spaniard, in which he remarks, that he is unable to assign any cause for the scarcity of Cuban writers, especially poets, when the climate of the country is especially adapted to develope the mind, and unfold the imagination in so quick and wonderful a manner. Those who promulgate these opinions, either endeavor to feign ignorance, or are wholly unacquainted with the system of censorship in force in Cuba, of which an idea may be formed by the following remarks, which cannot but be considered appropriate.

A law has indeed been enacted on this subject, but on comparing it with the practice, it will be readily seen

that it is not enforced. It was promulgated in Havana early in the year 1835 ; but an order was simultaneously given to all printers, forbidding them to print the most trifling paper, without its being previously examined by the Censors, and a permit granted for its publication, whether the subject was among those designated by the law as not requiring examination or not. A pretty good idea may hereby be formed of the honesty and sincerity of a government, which publish a law through the streets and public places with a great parade and martial music, and at the same time order that it be not observed. This is, however, what really occurs in Cuba, and it is exactly so with the treaties made with England as to the slave trade.

Besides this order, which destroyed almost entirely the new law, the Censors made another alteration. They wholly disregarded the provision of the law which required them to state the reasons on which their refusal to permit the publication of a manuscript rested. In some instances, they have required the editor of a newspaper to tell the author of an article, that the manuscript had been lost or forgotten, as an excuse for not publishing it. As these editors are at the mercy of the Censors, it is their interest to please them, and comply with their wishes. They have no other resource than relating their sufferings to their friends, and sometimes even to the very authors whose articles have been represented as mislaid. No use can be made of this information confidentially imparted, as the editor if requested to testify, would deny the truthfulness of the assertion, and the Censor would remain unpunished.

There is also a fault in this law, which is observed in nine-tenths of all the Spanish laws, it is, that no penalty was laid upon the Censors who would not comply with

the provision of setting forth the causes of their refusal. It wanted, therefore, in this respect, what Jurists call *sanction*, and hence the reason why it might easily be violated. The sanction affixed to some laws is quite ridiculous, and is reduced to the saying "*Pena de nuestra merced*:" that is, "The king will be displeased." There is in the Indian Code a law, by which the use of horses is forbidden to Indians in several districts of Mexico. It begins with a long preamble, and the prohibition comes at the end; but there is no penalty imposed upon those who violate the law. The Indians did not pay the least attention to such a regulation; and by the side of it there is another law, which says: "Having been informed that the former law is not observed, I charge and command the Viceroy to enforce it." They undoubtedly did not comply with the command, as there is still another regulation complaining of the non-observance of the law, and ordering its enforcement again; but even after all that had occurred, the law-maker did not think of laying a penalty upon the infractors.

The total disregard of that part of the law on publications, which requires the reason of each refusal to be stated, makes the censorship perfectly arbitrary, and gives rise to many abuses that are practised with impunity. Thus one of the Censors, Olafleta, did not allow a person named Bachiller, to publish an article advertising a copper mine, because a friend of his was thereby injured. Bachiller then complained to the Captain General, who was greatly surprised at the injustice of the refusal, and granted the permit. The Censors in doubtful cases, use to refuse their permits for the publication of manuscripts, and the reasons for so doing are obvious. If they allow them to be published, they incur perhaps, some responsibility; but if they refuse the per-

mit, they do not run any risk. The last course is therefore adopted, and the manuscripts are not published.

The following anecdote, will give a pretty accurate idea of the imperfection of the colonial régime in force in Cuba, and its great defects. A person required Larrazabal, the Notary Public of whom I have already spoken, to give him a certificate. The Notary asked for a sheet of stamp-paper of the eight dollar quality, to write it upon; and the party replied that according to law, the dollar and a half stamp paper was sufficient. "The case is rather doubtful," replied Larrazabal, "but if I ask less, I may be fined, and if more, there is no responsibility incurred." "I will address myself to the Court," said the party. "Well," said the Notary, "the application will cost you more than the amount of the difference, and if the Judge should yield to your demand, I would not obey him, as the responsibility is still on me. It would therefore be necessary for you to apply to the Board of Managers of the Royal Treasury, and then the expenses would amount to four times the difference, and you would not get the certificate in two months." Such annoyances can be inflicted by a Notary, who occupies in Cuba almost the lowest degree in the social scale; and it is not difficult to imagine how easily wrongs on the public may be perpetrated by government officers.

Cubans should, however, consider that the many wrongs inflicted on them by the government, are a consequence of their own apathy and indifference to the public interests. When the government commits any enormity, it receives no censure, nor are any protests made against its proceedings, and it frequently employs the Creoles themselves as instruments for justifying its most arbitrary procedures. The people, generally speaking, do not complain of the acts of the government when they

are not directly injured by them ; and even when this is the case, they suffer the evils, provided they be not of a very serious character.

The freedom, or rather the toleration allowed to the press by the Captain Generals, was more considerable before the law referred to was enacted, as may easily be seen by merely reading the papers published at that time, and comparing them with those now issued. There is scarcely a Cuban at the present time whose writings are published, as the press is entirely in the hands of the Spaniards, who are the authors of most of the articles published in the papers. A few on politics, however, are written by Creoles, who seem to have no other end in view, than to show their utter baseness and meanness. Such writings, therefore, deserve no consideration either for the subject they treat, or for the manner in which they are discussed.

The "Bimonthly Review," (*Revista Bimestre*), was regularly published three or four years before the enactment of the aforesaid law. The "Cuban Society of Literature," established that periodical publication under the editorship of the well known Creole, José Antonio Saco. He had formerly been editor of a weekly Spanish newspaper, printed in New York, which was freely circulated throughout the Island, though it contained some articles, which at the present time would not be considered safe for the Cuban people to read. This also would happen, most probably, with some published in the aforesaid Review.

Several other publications appeared before the year 1834, in which the most liberal principles and sentiments were set forth, as may be easily perceived by reading a disquisition on "The lawful causes of War;" and another, "On the Inviolability of the Members of the Cortes,"

published in the "Cuban Repertory," (*Repertorio Cubano*). In the newspapers of that time, several points in Political Economy, and even in the management of public affairs, were discussed so boldly, that their authors for fear of being persecuted, would not now dare even to ask permission to publish them.

Besides the few works already referred to, I have seen others written by those known here by the name of *Varela's disciples*, which are considered excellent. They are certainly pretty good; but I have read some others which seem to be entirely unknown, although they deserve much credit. I regret that the plan which I have endeavored to pursue, does not allow me to dwell more fully on the subject; for though I cannot boast of possessing a vast knowledge of Cuban literature, there are, I believe, many interesting matters not yet published. My remarks, on the other hand, might awake the suspicions of the government to the injury of many former authors and writers who are still living; and hence another reason to withhold all comment.

Poets have been more abundant in the Island, and even at the present time the newspapers are flooded with sonnets and other compositions. A Señor Abreu, especially, has made the public familiar with his prolific genius, which he employs in commemorating the birth-days of his friends or patrons. I believe, that in many of these compositions, there is a total disregard of metre, and a syllable more or less than the required number seems to be a matter of no consequence. In regard to originality of ideas and excellence of thoughts, which is a matter of more importance, I have found very little which could be properly classified under those heads.

Heredia is the father of Cuban poets, but he is not alone in his Helicon, as the old Zequeira, and the modern

Plácido, Briñas, &c., have already found a seat near him. I do not mention the poetess Avellaneda among these bards, because though a native of Cuba, I perceive that she likes to present her harmonious compositions to the Naiads of the Tajo, better than to those of the Almedares.

The establishment of the "Cuban Academy of Literature," which was founded in 1834, would have been in any other country, and under different circumstances, the source of much good. Its existence was, however so ephemeral, that there are scarcely any vestiges of its career. Several members of the "Economical Society," incited by Canon O'Gaban, who was their president, resolved to put an end to it, which they succeeded in doing through representations made to the government on the anti-royalist opinions of its members. The fruits of such an Institution would have always been very meagre with an enslaved press, and being, as it was, under the jealous eyes of the Spanish authorities.

But the censorship is not the only obstacle in Cuba to the progress of literature. There are no inducements for acquiring a thorough knowledge of any branch; and a superficial instruction seems to answer all desired purposes. The love of *show*, is generally, in my opinion, more intense than that of *learning*. Nevertheless, I have read a writing by a Creole, which very few persons are acquainted with, and which would perhaps deserve a prominent place in the best Reviews. There is nowhere in the Island a Library which is worthy being called such; and books, on account of their slow and uncertain sale, are very dear. The works published in Spain, sell here at an advance of two hundred and fifty per cent. on the regular prices, as they charge one *real columnario* (twelve and a half cents), for every *real de vellon* (five cents).

I might say much about the written legal reports used here, as a great deal of information on this point has been furnished me; but a single remark will suffice to demonstrate, that very little worthy of being noticed can be found in them. The defence is not free: the magistrates require a profound respect on the part of the lawyers, and the least disregard towards the Judges, or bold assertion in favor of the party, is punished with fines; and in some cases, the Counsellor is forbidden to follow his profession for a certain period of time. These severe penalties are imposed without a previous trial, and Judges have only to give their decrees, and they are fully carried out. The utmost limits to which the lawyer can go are not determined, nor are penalties assigned beforehand to those who trespass those bounds; so that in his uncertainty as to the meaning in which his words are going to be taken, he does not maintain in a proper manner the rights of his client.

Judges also have it in their power to injure lawyers by reducing their fees, without even mentioning any cause whatever; and as there is no tariff for regulating them, they can do it at random, though according to law, two other lawyers must concur in the abatement. Judges, however, very seldom exercise this power, except when the party who must pay the costs has some influence over them. The amount, then, is generally reduced to two-thirds or three-fourths of its original value. It is said that a Judge of the Audiencia curtailed the costs of the proceedings against a man who had failed, amounting to twelve thousand dollars, to four thousand, for the consideration of one hundred doubloons (one thousand seven hundred dollars), presented to him by the party.

The following anecdote, which will close this letter, will serve as a proof to many of the foregoing assertions.

Three or four years ago, a physician named Espárrago, had a long controversy through the newspapers with several other members of the same profession. One of them wrote an article against Espárrago, and showed the manuscript to several of his friends, who after reading it, advised him not to publish it. He refused to comply with their wishes, and said that his character was involved in the affair. The article was sent to the Censor, who read it, and found no reason to prohibit its publication. He, nevertheless resolved to refuse his permit, but before issuing his arbitrary *veto*, he wished to try other means. He sent a note to the author requesting an interview, and though he had never seen him before, told him, that he advised him, not as a government officer, but as a *friend*, not to publish the paper. The author, who had not paid any attention to the advice of his most intimate friends, readily yielded to the requirement of the Censor. It seems that his character was no longer interested in the publication. How easy it is for the government to obtain anything it chuses from the Cubans !

LETTER XLIX.

Hatred of Spaniards towards Americans—Their mutual contempt of each other—Young Inchaustegui—Court for the Examination of Accounts—Don Ramon Gonzalez—Abuses by the Managers of the Government Revenues—Lottery Tickets—Creole Mulattoes—Spaniards of African descent—Laws which are enforced without having been ever published.

ON LOOKING over the subjects which have been already treated in former letters, I find that many item have been accidentally omitted ; but thinking that they should not be passed unnoticed, I will briefly refer to them in this letter, which will be a kind of Appendix to those that preceded it.

Something has been said already on the hatred of the Spaniards towards Americans. At first, my want of sufficient knowledge of the language, did not allow me to understand many phrases which were frequently uttered in my presence. But now, it very seldom happens that I pass before a cluster of Spaniards, especially soldiers, seamen, or storekeepers, without hearing insulting words addressed to me in a very indirect manner, trusting that I would not understand them. It is rather hard on many occasions, to pass them by, without noticing their conversation ; but to pay the least attention to them, would often

render it necessary to resort to personal chastisement, and the risk would then be incurred of being lodged in the jail, and confined with murderers, thieves, &c. I could not, however, restrain myself one day; after I had passed two soldiers, who uttered some insulting expressions, I instantly returned, and demanded an explanation. They answered me in an humble manner, and very meekly retracted what they had said.

This hatred on the part of Spaniards is nothing strange, as their predominant passion is that of hatred. Even the natives of a Province hate those born in any other. They are, besides, in the habit of despising *all* foreigners, but in this they do not remain unpunished, as all foreigners look in the most contemptuous manner on these poor wretches.

Cubans, on the other hand, are kind and obliging towards foreigners in general, and especially exert themselves to please Americans. There exists, however, some ill-will between the natives of the different sections of the country. The people of Havana for instance, when speaking of the natives of Puerto Príncipe and other places, often say, "The *Tierradentro*," (a name given to all persons of the interior) "who does not play a trick at the beginning, will play it at the end," (*El que no la hace á la entrada, la hace á la salida*); and they in turn say, speaking of the Capital, "*La Habana es vana*," that is "Havana is foppish."

The late elopement of the Spanish singer, Señorita Santa Fé with young Inchaustegui, has brought to light a very strange and singular interview which her mother had with General Concha some time before the occurrence. She requested him to prohibit the young man to pass through the street where she lived, and to go to the theatre, as they by that means succeeded in speaking

to each other despite her prohibition. Concha replied, that he could not issue such an order without being considered an extravagant or foolish Governor, but that *he would banish the young man to Spain*. To do this, indeed, he had only to represent to the Supreme Government, "that the safety of the Island was, in his opinion, threatened by the residence of the suitor." The loving couple, however, disappeared in good season; the young lady it is said, took her flight from the theatre with the same royal dress and tinsel crown she had on.

As I have said nothing as to the "Court of Accounts," a few remarks shall be made in this place. Its object is to examine all accounts in which the public interests are concerned. Its decisions can only be amended by another Court, called "*Sala de Ordenanza*;" but as the Judges of the latter court, are also Judges in the former, appeals are generally useless, and enormities are suffered to pass unpunished. Those Judges have, besides, a share in the fines they impose, so that their aim is to *condemn* at random, whether there are reasons for it or not. When this condemnation is evidently unjust, and is afterwards repealed, the person appealing has in all cases to pay the costs of the appeal; and in order to avoid this evil, the party generally comes to an understanding with the Judges. They give him notice, that a decision against him is going to be issued, and he then pays them a bribe, which is a little more than the part of the fine that they would otherwise receive, provided the amount, as is frequently the case, is not much above the probable expenses of the appeal.

A Judge of that court, named Don Ramon Gonzalez, committed so many, and so flagrant abuses, that his name has become famous throughout the land. In a short time he amassed a capital of over one hundred thousand dol-

lars, which he intended to invest in Spain in purchasing a highly profitable office. Several persons who saw him, while at Madrid, say that he used to go every morning to inquire of the door-keeper of the Duke of Rianzares, the husband of the Queen Dowager, after the health of *their* Majesties, thus making the Duke another *Majesty*.

Marquis Montufar, was his fellow-judge in the aforesaid court; he was bound to share the spoils with Gonzalez. The latter, therefore, used to place before the Marquis the decrees to be signed, and by the side of them a heap of doubloons, without saying anything further on the transaction. "What does this mean?" inquired Montufar. "Be silent, sign the paper, and put the doubloons into your pocket," replied the scoundrel.

The managers of the government incomes also derive immense profits from this bribery system. One of the offices affording the most lucrative perquisites to the administrator of the Land Revenues, is that of declaring whether *alcabala* is to be collected on certain contracts or not: that is, whether a duty of six per cent. is to be exacted on their amount or not. The party who has to pay the duty, makes him a present of one-third or one-fourth of its amount; and a decree is issued, declaring that the contract is not dutiable. The administrator of the Sea Revenues, on the other hand, is commonly the person who most encourages smuggling. The invoices of loaded ships are considerably reduced by, and with his consent for the consideration of a certain sum paid to him by the consignees. Of course every dollar thus acquired produces a loss to the Exchequer, of ten or fifteen. In many mercantile houses, and more especially in those of the highest *standing* and *respectability*, a clerk is kept, who being thoroughly acquainted with these transactions, manages this branch of the business, and makes the entries

in such a manner that nothing can be discovered. Merchants allow him a share in the enormous profits derived from these transactions.

The officers of the government, as I have already said, take as much advantage as they possibly can of all business entrusted to them; and the sale of lottery tickets has not proved an exception to this rule. The law provides, that the tickets be distributed among several persons (*subcolectores*), to sell them at par, and that a commission of two per cent., shall be allowed to them; but the subcolectores very seldom obtain tickets without paying a premium, and the people, therefore, can buy them at par only at a single place (*La colecturia principal*), and for a few days only, as they are very soon told that the tickets are all out. A premium of twenty-five cents was formerly paid for each ticket; which, according to the general rumor, was applied to the benefit of Pinillos' son, who at present is Count of Villanueva. The par value of the ticket was four dollars, but on account of this premium, no person could buy one for less than four and a half. At present, as the prizes have been doubled, the price of tickets has been raised in proportion.

Spaniards, generally, indulge in the belief, or at least feign to do so, that Creoles are mulattoes, and allege with wonderful assurance, that by the mere fact of being born in Spain, every Peninsular is a *white*. In many cases, however, the evidence of the senses is opposed to this assertion, as the complexion of the greatest part of them is nearer that of negroes, than of white people; and there are besides, well grounded reasons for believing that much African blood flows in their veins, though there are many families that are evidently white, as is also the case in Cuba.

One of the armies that invaded Spain in the eighth

century, was formed of four thousand negroes from Ethiopia, who never were known to have left the country. What must now be the number of the descendants of those negroes, after the lapse of eleven centuries ? In fact, by their features and by the quality of their hair; the origin of many Spaniards can be confidently traced to the African race. Nevertheless, in some provinces of the Peninsula, they style themselves not only *pure whites*, but *noblemen* also ; and it is very difficult to meet with a Spaniard who considers himself a commoner (*plebeyo*).

The judgment which a foreigner would form of the political régime of Cuba, by the printed laws and regulations on the matter, would be very erroneous, as the *practice* differs widely from the *theory*, or from what the laws command. Orders are sometimes enacted orally, and not published ; so that the well-known principle, that laws ought to be promulgated before they can be enforced, is not observed in this unhappy Colony. Such is the absurdity of this system, that its existence is almost incredible ! Lastly, another fact will be adduced to prove how easily the government disregards all the rights of the people, and deprives them, whenever it chooses, of even those privileges which an inveterate custom entitles them to receive. It is only one of the many feats of the spoiler O'Donnell.

Before his administration, any person had the right on commencing a law-suit, to choose any Judge or Court he pleased, provided the other party did not belong to any of the privileged classes over whom certain courts only have jurisdiction. In suing a person, therefore, the court of the Captain General, or of any of the other five Alcaldes Mayores, could be applied to. In the former case, that personage would charge twenty-five cents for each signature affixed by him during the progress of the suit ;

but in the latter, he would have nothing to do, nor any fee to collect. O'Donnell did not like to lose these silver pieces, and therefore gave an oral order to all Notaries Public not to allow any person to sue another without choosing him as Judge. In this manner he incurred no responsibility for his arbitrary assumption, as no order had been published, and the only manner of proving that he had really issued it, was by taking the affidavits of the Notaries; but these Governors are perfectly satisfied that nobody will ever dare to testify the truth against the authorities; especially as little attention is here paid to false swearing, nobody considering such an act as a real offence.

L E T T E R L .

Commencement of the Cuban Scenes — The ceremony of watching and carrying the *Seal* — The laws violated at the moment of their birth — Incredible blunders — A crazy magistrate — The Judge *Avis Phoenix*.

IN WRITING these letters, dear Charles, I would like to make my description of Cuba not only very accurate, but also so vivid and lively that you may easily form as complete an idea of the country as a person living in it. But if this is difficult even for fine and excellent pencils, how can my rough and unpractised pen succeed? Nevertheless, I will make all the efforts in my power to attain this end; and nothing, in my opinion, can do more in the way of accomplishing it, than to relate to you, with the utmost accuracy, several scenes of real life which have been described to me by eye-witnesses, and which give a better idea of Cuban customs and institutions, than long dissertations, to which, by-the-bye, I am very averse. After this brief preface, let us begin by relating an occurrence which took place about seventeen years ago.

My friend Don Plácido was the narrator, and also one of the performers. On the afternoon of the eighth day of April, 1839, he was sitting near his window, smoking a *segar*, and enjoying the pleasure of the fresh air, with his

linen coat and slippers on, but without waistcoat or cravat. Another lawyer, a friend of his, who was passing by, stopped at his window, and said :—

“Plácido, let us go and see the ceremony of the Seal.” Both friends burst out into loud and contemptuous laughter. “You are right,” said our doctor, “this ludicrous farce is worth seeing But walk in, I must dress myself.”

A few minutes afterwards, both were on their way towards St. Francis’ Convent, conversing at great length on the impropriety of establishing a Superior Court in Havana. They concurred in the opinion, that it was going to produce more evils than the system previously followed in law-suits. In Puerto Príncipe, where it was formerly established, the Judges could live on a smaller income than in the capital, where they would probably like to make a great show.

“Were honest and capable Judges appointed, some advantages might be derived,” remarked the other lawyer, whom I will call Sanchez.

“I believe,” said my friend, “that when the good or evil that an Institution can do, is dependent on the personal endowments of its members, the probabilities are, that it will be mischievous.”

“They have begun already to show what they will do,” said the other. “Almost all of them have arrived in the city penniless, and have borrowed money to buy their household furniture, carriage, &c. The lenders in many cases, have been persons overloaded with law-suits, especially debtors, who are not willing to pay. These Judges must be very ungrateful if they fulfill their duties afterwards.”

“I know of two of them,” said Don Plácido, “who go every evening to play ombre with a man of a rather

weak mind, who in less than a month has lost over a thousand dollars."

"On the other hand," added Sanchez, "they affirm that the Regent knows little about the legal profession."

"At least," remarked his friend, "I will bet anything, that he knows less than the Judges; these less than the Attorney Generals; and these less than the lawyers: and I dare to affirm it, because it ought to be just the reverse Spain is the country of wonders!"

"And they cannot allege that we speak thus, because we are Creoles. In one of the works of the *Spaniard* Lafuente, it is said, that all the animals of the Nation assembled in Congress once to make appointments for several offices, and the results were as follow:—The hare, which is believed to be the most cowardly animal, was elected Minister of War; the tortoise, being the dullest aquatic, obtained the office of Minister of the Navy; and the ass, which is generally considered as the symbol of stupidity, was appointed Minister of Public Instruction."

The Doctor burst into a loud laugh, by which his friend feared that those who were around them would come to understand the subject of their conversation. They were already surrounded by people who proceeded towards the church, and entered through the main door of the building.

"How is this?" inquired Sanchez; "the official advertisement in the newspapers says, that the Seal shall be placed in the vestry, and now we find it in the church."

"Is it a matter of surprise to you?" asked Don Plácido, in a very low tone of voice. "Among us, the first man to violate the law, is he who makes it. The regulations of the Court which is to be established now, provide that no person who has not been a practical lawyer for a

period of ten years at least, can be appointed a Judge of it. Not one of them, however, complies with this requisite, and it is not quite a year since some of them began the practice of the law."

"It is not strange, that in a country where so little regard is paid to the laws, everything should be in so hopeless a state."

"The worst of it is, that we never shall respect the laws, as our law-makers are unable to enact good ones, and nobody likes to submit to what is bad."

Both friends then entered the building. The church was crowded, and the throng of newly arrived people passed through the left nave towards a communion altar, inside the railing of which one of the Judges was sitting. He was dressed entirely in black, and was fanning himself with his handkerchief, on account of the intense heat which made him sweat profusely. By his side stood a small table covered with cloth, upon which a large cushion of crimson damask had been placed, with a small screw-press upon it. This was the *Seal* of the Audiencia which was being watched, and had to be carried the next day in regular procession. This was the cause of the crowded state of the church.

Two women approached the railing, looking for something to see, but only found the press on the cushion, and the broad face of the magistrate, who endeavored to assume an air of great solemnity. The whole was ludicrous enough, but the circumstance of the Judge being moon-eyed, strongly excited the temptation to laugh.

"Oh, pshaw!" said one of them; "did we come here only to see this?"

"That has a very gallows-like appearance," remarked the other: "What a disappointment we have experienced!"

The Judge looked very angrily at them, but they laughed and retired. Don Plácido and his friend then approached the altar without looking at the Judge, and the former with the aid of his spectacles cast a glance at the press, but seeing nothing in particular, proceeded. A man then came up to them, and inquired, pointing to the Magistrate: "Is that fellow going to stay there till to-morrow?" "He ought to do so," answered Don Plácido, "but he will go quietly home in the evening, and afterwards represent things in quite a different light."

"First fraud of the Audiencia!" said Sanchez, at which all those who stood around laughed. Soon after the two friends met several lawyers dressed in their long black robes; they had solicited the privilege of keeping company with the Judge in church.

"What do you think of those poor wretches?" inquired Don Plácido of his companion, with a contemptuous smile.

"They begin to do honor to the profession by their meanness and abjectness."

After walking for some distance they separated, and agreed to meet the next morning to see the procession.

At nine o'clock of the following day, the Captain General left his palace accompanied by a large crowd of tipstiffs, door-keepers, Judges, and several lawyers dressed in the same style with those seen the day before. Sanchez and his friend looked at them as they passed: the one examined their faces, and the other strove to apply the scanty knowledge he possessed of the sciences of Lavater and Gall to ascertain their inclinations.

"I have not perceived a single spark of intelligence in any of them, and their faces do not evince much honesty," remarked Sanchez.

"What I have observed," said Plácido, "is not the

want of knowledge, but so extraordinary a development of certain organs, that I involuntarily took hold of my watch to secure it."

At last the procession arrived at the Convent, and the Regent ordered one of the constables, who seemed to be the strongest of all, to take the machine and carry it away.

The law provides, that a mule should be used on such occasions, and that the press be carried on the pack-saddle; but the Audiencia, undoubtedly, has more power than the law, and this direction was totally disregarded. An open carriage, drawn by four teams of horses was procured, and "the gallows," as the woman styled it, was placed in it; after which they proceeded very slowly through the streets. The residents, who at the suggestion of the authorities, had covered their windows with lively colored curtains, looked through them, but could not see anything worthy of so much parade. The amusement was occasionally enhanced by the spectacle of a policeman running after a negro and beating him, or of a soldier, who by way of fun, freely distributed blows to those around him.

Finally, the whole company reached the palace, where the Halls of Justice were located, in the best spirits. One of the Judges, however, whom I will call S * *, had been obliged to pass through a pool, and had soiled his feet above the ankles. Being a person of a very irritable temper, he kept cursing all the time, and those who happened to go near him, knowing that he had been entirely crazy twice before, feared that another attack of lunacy would come on, and that he would knock them down or use some other violence.

It would seem very strange, and many will perhaps consider it a joke of mine, that the government should have appointed a crazy person a Judge of the Superior

Court, but I have been assured that such was the case, and no person from whom I have inquired, has denied the assertion.

I have been assured also, that he was the Phoenix of Spanish Judicature ; and I will endeavor to examine this point, firstly, because, while I am unwilling to give currency to undeserved praises, I wish to lose no opportunity of paying honor to the truth : and secondly, because a notability so much praised, should be carefully observed and studied, as by knowing his degree of excellence, we can easily determine the real worth of his companions, who are acknowledged by everybody to be inferior to him.

People generally believed that he was honest, and that he never accepted bribes. He was not *just*, however ; that is, he did not act on the praiseworthy determination to give to every man what rightfully belonged to him. On the contrary, he was a despot in the Court, and was very envious. The latter fault is scarcely noticed in Spain on account of its prevalence.

A lawyer once sued one of his clients before S * * *, in order to compel him to pay five hundred dollars, the amount of fees due to him. S * * * undoubtedly feared, that the lawyer, even if he had only a few clients of that description, would make in a year more than the amount of salary he himself received.

"Five hundred dollars !!!" exclaimed S * * *, evincing great surprise. "What have you to say on the matter?" inquired he from defendant. Fortunately for the lawyer, his client did not wish to take advantage of the disposition of the Judge in his favor. Had he done so, the probabilities are, that the amount of the fees would have been reduced to one-half or less. But the debtor acknowledged the justice of the debt, and only remark-

ed, that he had not paid before for want of money; where-upon S * * * ordered him, without consulting the other party, to pay the sum in six months, and the lawyer was commanded to pay the costs!

Another fact will afford more information on Cuban affairs than many pages. It not only presents S * * * in a different light, but will also acquaint us with many other interesting topics. An example given in a few words, sometimes saves long and tedious explanations.

S * * * one day saw in the newspapers a decree which he had signed without reading it, and complaining to the clerk who had drawn it up, for having used an improper word, said: "One of these days you will make me sign a decree ordering myself to be hung." The other ought to have replied: "It was your duty to draw it up yourself, as you are paid for so doing, but if through laziness you have not been willing even to read it, nobody but yourself is to blame." Nevertheless, the clerk thus unjustly reproached, did not answer, as it is a well known feature in the Spanish system of government, that no officer ever transacts the business entrusted to him, but a third party is always resorted to, who saves them the trouble and labor.

Being once in the chair as Rector or President of the University, S * * * inquired, what were the regulations of the Institution bearing upon the case that was under discussion, adding, that he had not read them. The chief business that the Rector has to perform, is to carry out and enforce these regulations; and some idea may be formed of how satisfactorily he could fulfill the duties of his office, without knowing what they were. This is a short and accurate sketch of a magistrate who is considered the *ne plus ultra*. What must be the character and qualifications of others?

But I perceive that my description of the ceremony of the *Seal*, is not yet finished. The whole procession went into the Hall, where the "gallows" were deposited, and thence they proceeded to the Cathedral, where a solemn *Te Deum* was celebrated.

Don Plácido and his friend did not follow them, but before separating, the latter inquired :

"What did you like best of the whole affair?"

"The gracefulness of the Regent in thrusting in his gown under his left arm. In this he will not suffer by a comparison with the most gallant bullfighter."

LETTER LI.

A scene in the *Halls of Injustice* — Polite manner of the Judges —
Wonderful syntax — The lawyer vexed — Motives for the deed
— The one-eyed *Oidor*.

HAVING spoken in my former letters of the Court named the Audiencia of Havana, I will begin this by relating an occurrence which I witnessed in the same tribunal, though the order of events may not be strictly adhered to.

Don Plácido and myself once entered the palace of the Audiencia, a large building located fronting the city walls. We passed by a guard of eight or ten soldiers who were stationed at the door, and ascended two flights of lofty stone stairs. On entering the Halls of Justice, (my friend remarked that they ought to be called Halls of *Injustice*): a man accoutred with a sword, and dressed very much like the constable in the bull-fight which has been already described, told me to leave my walking cane at the door. Shortly afterwards, another similar personage ordered me, in an angry tone, not to put my hands on the railing, and not to approach too near to it.

My friend looked at me and smiled. I cast my eyes around to see if a bench could be found, but there was not any: it would be a great disrespect to sit down before the Court. There were three judges dressed in the same style with the constables, with only this difference, that instead of three cornered hats, they had bonnets on

their heads. The reporter (*relator*) was seated facing them at a very low table covered with manuscripts, and on both sides of him, but on a higher platform, two benches were placed. On one of them a man, dressed also with long black robes, was sitting with his head uncovered. He was a lawyer. While the reporter was reading, the judges spoke to each other once in a while. A few moments afterwards one of them nodded and fell asleep.

Another lawyer then entered within the railing, saluted the judges most respectfully, and sat down fronting the other. The grave Magistrates did not make the slightest movement. If a dog had made his appearance, some slight gesture would have been perceived.

"It seems that there are some impolite people besides the Yankees," remarked I to my friend, in a low tone of voice.

"They would not be perfect *oidores* without being very uncivil. But I believe that we are going to see curious things here to-day, as the Regent hates that lawyer, because he did not go to visit him on his arrival from Spain. As he has come rather late, the reporter is reading what he should have said."

At this moment the lawyer rose from his seat, and said :—

"May it please the Court—I beg your Highness to allow me to make the defence orally, instead of by the reading of my written report, as is being done."

The Regent, without consulting his fellow-judges, said angrily :

"By no means : *the lawyer* has not fulfilled his duty in coming late."

The Counsellor did not answer, and the reading continued.

"Now he has revenged himself already," said Don Plácido.

"I perceive that he did not use the word *you* in speaking to him, but employed the third person singular," remarked I.

"Such is always the course pursued by Regents, in order to speak to Counsellors in the most contemptuous language."

"But, has he not done right in reprimanding the lawyer?"

"Not at all; because Counsellors are not bound to appear before the Audiencia and make oral defences in civil cases, as this is, but only in grave criminal prosecutions. But even if the lawyer had been guilty of that offence, he ought not to have been censured in public, as the law forbids it. Let us go out; I do not want to see these scoundrels any longer."

As soon as he had spoken this last word, he turned his face, and left the room. I followed him, and when we were in the lobby, he again exclaimed:—

"Scoundrel! In what barn-yard has he been brought up?"

"What is the matter?" inquired an attorney, a friend of Don Plácido.

The latter then related to him what had happened.

"I know the cause of this," said the attorney. "That lawyer has just published a pamphlet on the system of prosecuting law-suits in civil cases; the Censor heedlessly granted the permit for printing it, and one of the regulations enacted by the Audiencia is censured by him, though in a very considerate manner."

"That is not all," added another attorney, who had arrived in the mean time. "The Regent has promised the party of the vexed lawyer a favorable decision, and

he has therefore regretted his being late, as his fellow-judges cannot be so easily beguiled."

"The lawyer on the other hand," said the other attorney, "has not, in fact, been late; but the judges have commenced the session earlier than is customary."

"And what steps will that poor counsellor take to gain redress for having been so unjustly reprimanded?" asked I.

"To suffer silently," was the general answer.

"Nothing would tempt me to be a lawyer in Cuba," I replied.

"Oh!" exclaimed Don Plácido, "If the rights of the people were respected, and the laws complied with, that lawyer might have answered in a suitable manner; but here . . . ? He would have been fined \$500. . . . Let us go. . . . Curses on this building."

My friend then rushed to the stairs, and I followed him. When about half way down, we met another lawyer, who was coming up, laughing aloud. He said that Judge P * * was in the vestibule greatly enraged, because on entering the palace, a young man who was standing at the door, had not taken his hat off; that the Judge had beaten him with his cane, and then ordered him to be taken to jail.

At this moment we saw P * * coming up; and in order to avoid saluting him, we receded and went out of his way. His ugly face will not be easily forgotten by those who have seen it; stupidity was at once visible in his eyes, besides which, one of them was imperfect.

When we reached the street, we perceived at a distance a policeman conveying to Tacon's jail the perpetrator of the *horrid crime* of not having saluted the one-eyed judge. I could not forbear remarking—

"You were right in saying, that this was the Hall of Injustice. What man having the least self-respect, can
 . . . ntry?"

LETTER LII.

Milk-Punch battle — Preliminaries of the war — Marti's conflict with Escauriza — Scene in the Palace — Appearance of the invading army — Frightful attack — Exploits of O'Donnell and his troops — An African heroine.

NOTHING has ever been a source of more delight and amusement to me than the description given some days ago by the Filibuster of the widely known and famous battle of *Milk Punch*, won by General O'Donnell shortly after his arrival.

Some masquerade balls were being celebrated at the time in Escauriza's saloon, and also at Tacon's theatre, located in close proximity. Marti, the proprietor of the latter place, perceived that through the competition he was losing a share of the public patronage, and devised means to put down his rival.

Marti and O'Donnell's wife, being both Catalonians, no great exertion was needed to form an acquaintance; and the friendship and patronage of the General and his wife were very soon gained by means of suitable presents. A gift was always welcomed by those personages, and consequently they felt the warmest sympathy towards their countryman. Marti, being aware of this, related his troubles to O'Donnell, who, as was natural,

endeavored to apply a remedy, and, all the more, when his lady whispered the following words :—

“ If he has made these valuable presents without any occasion, how large will they be if we afford him a large profit ?”

O'Donnell therefore promised Marti, *upon his word*, that he would order Escauriza's saloon to be closed, and the owner of the theatre then left, highly delighted.

The three-tailed Bashaw, however, did not take every thing into consideration when making his promise. He did not recollect that Escauriza had obtained a license, for which he paid a considerable number of doubloons. His secretary undoubtedly had not yet given them to him, as otherwise it was not possible he could have forgotten so happy an event.

“ What shall we do, Manuela ?” inquired O'Donnell of his wife, before his confidant Paniagua, who had reminded him of the circumstance of the license.

“ It can be done very easily,” remarked Paniagua, who was already acquainted with what was passing.

“ What shall we do ?” inquired both consorts at the same time.

“ The license does not fix the hour at which the ball shall end ; and you have only to order Escauriza to close at ten o'clock, and allow Marti to continue all night.”

“ There is one objection to this,” remarked O'Donnell, “ and that is, that Escauriza must have understood that the license was for keeping the place open all night, as otherwise he would not have wanted it.”

“ That is true,” replied the other ; “ but the license does not specify it.”

“ And we have already made a solemn promise,” added Manuela.

“ Draw up the order,” replied the gallant General, in a resolute tone, addressing himself to Paniagua.

By twilight, on that day, a dense crowd filled up the saloons of Escauriza's coffee-house, and the square fronting it, as well as the streets on the sides, were for some time covered with human beings. Numberless stands, provided with torch-lights, and covered with candies and hazel-nuts, were seen scattered around the place; but still more numerous were those kept by negresses, who, provided with large earthen pans over a charcoal fire, and a small table full of glasses, were selling hot *milk punch*, after which the memorable battle that soon ensued, was named.

When the masqueraders in the saloons had been enjoying for a short time the pleasures of the dance, a great noise was heard at the bar. The Deputy of the Chief of Police for that ward, (*comisario de barrio*,) had just given Escauriza the unexpected notice that he must close his doors, and put an end to the amusement. "The license to have my saloons open has cost me money! This is a swindle!" cried Escauriza in a state of madness; but on learning that his rival Marti had not been ordered to do the same, his indignation and rage rose to the highest pitch.

It was now ten o'clock, precisely the time that the largest number of people were making their way into the building. Each of them, on entering, left one dollar in the silver waiter placed near the door, and Escauriza wanted to enjoy still longer the music produced by the striking of the coins against each other. Those who had already paid did not wish to leave, and their arguments were founded on the best reasons. The Deputy Policeman, backed by two soldiers, again ordered the proprietor to comply with the General's commands; but Escauriza answered angrily: "I will not do it." The Deputy thought this reply was meant as a joke, and addressing

himself to those present, said :—" Gentlemen, let us go out. The Government bids you do so."

But then a dreadful shout was heard from the crowd, as from one man :—" Death to the bailiff! Traitor! Give me back my money!" At this time two or three tumblers were seen flying from the bar, and breaking to pieces on the Deputy's body, who then left in great haste, and with as much speed as his limbs would allow.

Nobody knew or suspected that he had gone to give notice to the Captain-General of what had taken place, and the amusement continued as lively as ever. The news of the flight of the Deputy Policeman, who, it was said, was wounded, and bleeding, rapidly spread throughout the ward, and an immense multitude of idle people, and others who were anxious to see what was going on, were soon on the spot. The rattling of the coins in the plate was still uninterrupted, and Marti, who witnessed this, for him, heart-rending spectacle, became so excited, that he was on the eve of fighting Escauriza.

Such was the state of things late in the evening, when a great noise was heard of cavalry running through the city gate called Monserrate; the drum of the guard stationed in it was beaten, and the courageous O'Donnell made his appearance in a hackney-carriage surrounded by lances and soldiers. He halted when about two hundred feet from the doors of the saloon, and did not alight from the volante for a short while. The cause of this stoppage was afterwards learned to have been "prudence." Though the populace was unarmed, it was at least "a populace," and *prudent* O'Donnell waited for the arrival of the infantry, which, on leaving his palace, he ordered to proceed to the spot with all possible despatch, from the barracks named "La Fuerza."

As soon as the largest corps of the army arrived, the

courageous General rushed like a lion towards the coffee-house; he unsheathed his sword, and had the pleasure of seeing all the crowd in great haste leaving the saloons through the side doors. He alone took possession of that castle, though its garrison consisted of over two thousand men and women! He only made, however, one single prisoner; a poor old man who, despite his exertions, could not run. O'Donnell administered to him a couple of blows with the flat of his sword; and then sheathed his weapon and pushed him out of the building.

Being now master of the deserted coffee-house, he thoroughly overhauled the saloons, without success, in search of Escauriza, who had probably concealed himself somewhere under the counter. His anger was then directed against those who were standing outside; wherever a knot of persons was seen, he went to them, and dispersed the circle with blows of his fist, accompanied by high words and blasphemies. O'Donnell looked like one of those heroes of Ariosto, who, with severe blows, put to flight powerful armies. "Just like those," remarked Joseito, "have been probably the great feats performed by Cortes and Pizarro on the poor harmless Indians of America."

The soldiers, meantime, did not wish to remain simple spectators of the wonderful exploits accomplished by their General. They, therefore, attacked at the point of the bayonet, the people near by, and men, women, and children were seen rushing with all possible speed in all directions. Their great swiftness prevented the loss of a great number of lives; but some were so closely pursued, that they threw themselves headlong into the ditches.

One of the soldiers, finding himself disappointed in the gratification of his murderous inclinations, began to amuse himself by breaking the tumblers that were on the small

tables. One of the negro women, on seeing her stand so wantonly attacked, made up her mind to defend it. On looking around, she found no better weapon than the pan-full of punch that was boiling near her, and taking hold of it with both hands, she threw it in the face of our hero.

The intense pain produced by the hot liquid, extorted a horrible scream from the soldier, and his eyes were so severely injured, that he lost his sight forever. It is fair to presume that to make amends for this mishap, he was afterwards favored with the cross of *Isabel la Católica*.

O'Donnell heard this doleful scream, and fearing that it was an alarm, he ordered his troops to attack the fugitive crowd on all sides. All the stands were then thrown down, the awnings cut to pieces, and the pans broken into minute particles, were spread together with their contents on the ground. In a few moments all the enemies had disappeared, and the field of battle was left in possession of the renowned Minister of War of the illustrious Spanish nation.

Marti then went to him, and said :—

“ *My General*, I am exceedingly obliged to you, but your Excellency has driven away all the people !”

O'Donnell, with an expressive smile, answered :—

“ Advertise another ball for to-morrow, and you want to make a great deal of money.”

Joseito here put an end to his narrative with this witty remark :—

“ The next morning the battle-field was soaked with *milk*, and the ground covered with candy *balls* !”

LETTER LIII.

The Departures — Don Joaquin Gomez again — Rumors as to the behavior of Tacon — His fears — His hasty departure, or rather his flight — Probable effects of a shot — Conspiracy of the Catalonians — Plots of the Creoles — Their extreme thankfulness — Last act of Roncali — First enormity of Concha.

THE unhappy Cubans have become accustomed to kiss the hand by which they are flogged, in gratitude for not receiving quite as many lashes as their masters might have administered to them. If this and other truths, uttered in the course of my letters, are considered by them bitter, the blame devolves entirely upon themselves, as in publishing them, I am prompted by the desire of doing all in my power to promote such a reform in their proceedings as my sympathy for them makes me wish. Should this desirable improvement take place, I would hasten with pleasure to gainsay my assertions.

At seven o'clock in the forenoon of the 22d day of April 1838, a dense crowd was seen around the palace of the Captain-General. Creoles, Catalonians, Negroes, Military men in full costume, &c, were standing in large circles. The portico of the palace, where the Intendente now resides, was full of people, curious to witness the departure of General Tacon, who had just delivered all

his powers into the hands of his successor. The Creoles were highly delighted, and the Spaniards very gloomy: the former went to enjoy themselves, and the latter to mourn over the event.

Every thing was ready, but Tacon was not to be seen. He looked through the blinds, and on perceiving many Creole faces among the crowd, a just suspicion took possession of his mind. "He who is guilty dreads punishment," says the proverb. The despot had inflicted many wrongs, and his conscience showed him what he deserved.

Don Joaquin Gomez, of whom I have before spoken, then made his appearance. He had an enormously large bundle of newspapers under his arm, and walked towards the doors of the palace. He was very much fretted, and could hardly breathe, as he had not been willing to pay twenty cents for carriage-hire, nor even sixpence for having the bundle carried by a negro. In Havana, therefore, where it is almost a dishonor to carry the smallest parcel along the streets, a man with two millions capital was seen panting along for a considerable distance with a load that he could hardly lift. On entering the portico, he saw the people looking at him with astonishment, and he seemed to imagine that they were censuring his stinginess, or that they had perceived that by this last act of flattery he was aiming to secure the "Great Cross of *Isabel la Católica*," which the Ex-Bashaw had promised to present to him. He felt somewhat abashed, and did not raise his eyes from the ground.

A long while elapsed since the entrance of Gomez into the palace, but Tacon was not seen taking his departure. Everybody then began to assign causes for the delay. The Ex-Governor, despising the command of the Queen, resigned his powers two days after the order for his removal was communicated to him. He should have done

it immediately, and his delay received a two-fold explanation. Some said, that fearing a beating on the part of the Creoles, he did not wish to be deprived of his power until the last moment; others asserted that the Catalonians had advised him not to comply with the requirements of the supreme government, but to remain at his post. For two days, he seemed to have been fluctuating as to what course he should follow.

Time passed on, and still he did not appear; and now other rumors were afloat. Some said that a conspiracy had just been discovered to murder him while on his way to the vessel, and others affirmed that a deputation of merchants engaged in the slave trade, was urging him to accept the propositions of the Catalonians. The former assertion, it seems, rested on better foundation than the latter; for when it was least expected, the guard was seen running to arms, to perform the customary salute. Two armed Aides-de-camp went out of the palace, and immediately behind them Tacon and his successor Ezpeleta followed. It was observed that the Ex-Governor was on the right side, a place which ought to have been occupied by the person then having the command.

He must be excused, however, for he was highly excited, and came out almost running. Instead of proceeding by the proper route, he passed through the gardens of the "Plaza de Armas" so swiftly, that General Ezpeleta, and the crowd of armed officers by whom he was surrounded, were scarcely able to follow him. It would have been an impossible task for a murderer to approach him; but Tacon, who considered himself out of the reach of a dagger, did not feel quite so secure against the effects of a ball. He was evidently somewhat beside himself, and no other cause than his fears could be assigned to the occurrence.

Meanwhile, not the least noise was perceived. Not a single shout of love or hatred was heard; every body seemed to contemplate with amazement that strange departure, and did not wish even to speak, waiting, perhaps, for the moment in which the report of a fire-arm should be heard. After he arrived on board the vessel, he was greeted by a part of the crowd on the wharf, but he did not come out to acknowledge the compliment, not wishing, probably, to serve as a target.

What would the fate of Cuba have been if on the departure of her tyrant, a ball, shot by a courageous patriot, had pierced his heart? Such an eloquent protest would have modified the proceedings of later governors; but the incredible fact that Tacon was allowed to go unpunished, encouraged O'Donnell, Cañedo, and Concha, to carry out their blood-thirsty and unfeeling plans. The ordeals to which Cuba has since then been subjected, have been produced only by the want of a Cocles, who would volunteer himself as a victim on the occasion.

But Tacon's departure was not the occurrence which suggested to me the assertion uttered at the beginning of this letter. I then referred to the embarkation of Roncali, which took place many years afterwards. The Spaniards extolled the former for the evils he had inflicted on the Creoles, and these tendered to the latter an affectionate farewell, not on account of any good which they had received from him, but because Roncali had not afflicted or oppressed them as much as he could have done.

I have already remarked that he did not pay any attention to informers, as he did not consider it worth while to notice the exertions of a few young men who, in their despair, endeavored to change the political régime of their country. Roncali knew that those generous ideas met with few sympathizers; that the people formed a dull

and sluggish mass, which did not feel the injuries inflicted ; and that those who might have aroused them were sunk in the mire of degradation and abjectness. Persecutions, therefore, would have been hurtful to the Spanish cause, as they would have furnished weapons to its enemies.

The stupid Catalonians, however, did not understand the wisdom of this policy ; they wanted to have torrents of blood shed by the executioner, and were anxious to have the pleasure of hearing the lamentations of the children, widows, and mothers of the victims. But on seeing that the policy of Roncali was not in accordance with their infamous wishes, they began to speak of having General Armero, then commander of the naval station, as Governor, well aware that he would fully carry out their blood-thirsty inclinations.

A conspiracy was therefore set on foot to remove Roncali ; and the fact becoming known among the Creoles, a few young men resolved to sustain the General in his post. A good opportunity presented itself to revenge old grudges, wanton insults, undeserved iniquities, and wicked procedures. Many armed themselves even with knives, and the Peninsular hardware dealers, on seeing the unprecedented demand for the article, became alarmed, and refused to sell them to Creoles. They also stopped the sale of gun-powder, balls and fire-arms, unless the purchaser was well known as belonging to their party.

It has been said since the event, that the Creoles had in view the overthrow of the Spanish Government ; and though this is not wholly impossible, I believe that such was not the case, and that their only aim was to oppose themselves to the removal of the General, as the plans were not adopted for any other purpose. The motive of these proceedings was, indeed, very humble : only an excessive gratitude. The Creoles prepared themselves to

pay at a great sacrifice for what was only a duty ; but the unfortunate Cubans are so accustomed to tyranny and oppression that they consider themselves deprived of all rights, while their governors are reputed as having no duties to fulfil.

A mean spirited person informed Roncali of the plans of the Catalonians. He summoned the chiefs, and informed them that their heads were responsible for the continuance of public peace. They became frightened, and went in great haste to dissolve the Clubs over which they respectively presided. Many Creoles were also afraid, and left the city : some of those who were preparing to defend the General, were imprisoned for a short time ; but his future persecutors received only, as a penalty, that timely warning. Thus, Spaniards in Cuba are considered by the Government as superior to Creoles in some respects ; and such must be the case, as the latter submit themselves to their rule, like a lion which has been tamed, without thinking that a slight effort would suffice to annihilate its master. But in spite of that wrongful behavior, the attachment of Creoles to Roncali did not lessen. On learning the news of his removal, a sentimental address was drawn up and signed by numberless persons. Arrangements were also made to tender him a splendid farewell.

The attendance on this occasion was unparalleled ; the enthusiasm of the youth beyond bounds, and the boisterous huzzas formed a remarkable contrast with the silent departure of Tacon. But the Creoles, who were the promoters of these demonstrations, thought that they were committing a crime, as the feelings of the Spaniards were thereby hurt, and as a proof, I will only adduce the fact that the young man who took charge of putting the address into Roncali's hands, refused afterwards to do it,

and another was then appointed. When it was seen that Concha pursued the system of terror, and did not approve of the mildness of his predecessor, the greater part of the persons who signed the address regretted having done it.

Roncali, instead of following the example of Tacon, placed himself in the most conspicuous place on deck, where he stood receiving the greetings and huzzas of the immense crowd until the vessel was out of the reach of the voice. They assure us that his emotion was great, and some go so far as to affirm that tears were seen flowing from his eyes. If such was the case, I would remark, that his remorse was more bitter than that of his successors or predecessors; and I say *more bitter*, because no one of them all can have been free from it. To act as the instrument of injustice and oppression, and as the promoter of the unhappiness of a whole people, is a crime common to all Captain-Generals of Cuba: a crime which can only be forgiven by the Divine Mercy, because it is unbounded.

But after relating that the last act of Roncali was to weep tears of repentance, it is proper to give an account of the first enormity of his successor Concha. He thought it best to give notice that he should exercise an unlimited despotism, and in order to do it in rather a covert though unquestionable manner, he found no better device than to summon the Editors of the Havana papers, and order them orally to write an article on Roncali's departure, giving a *mere* notice that the event had taken place, without any further comment whatever, and taking only a few lines.

Until this time the censorship of the press had been limited, as I before remarked, to the blotting out of whole phrases, and to prohibiting the publication of entire articles; but it did not prescribe the subjects of the editorials, nor the manner in which they should be treated. But

now the Editors have to publish the articles which are sent to them from the office of the Captain-General, as if written by themselves, and this is the only explanation that can be given of the fact that the "Diario de la Marina" published on the day after the arrival of Pezuela that base and flattering biography, in which facts are revealed that the General alone could have disclosed.

LETTER LIV.

First expedition of Narciso Lopez — Rumors — Surprise — Falgueras' Telescope — Disquisition — Casaseca — Ceruti vanquished by a match — Exploits of the renowned Carrasco — His Mausoleum in a filthy place — Reëmbarcation of Lopez — The Cholera.

THE 19th day of May is a remarkable anniversary for Cuba, but more especially for the Spanish Government, which knows the great importance of the epoch which it commemorates.

The cholera had made its appearance in the capital of the Island, and in the course of a few months it had manifested as great, if not greater, virulence than in 1833, when its ravages were of the most sad and terrific description. Consternation and terror had taken possession of the minds of the people. The general conversation dwelt upon the disease, and politicians had their attention entirely turned to the horrid calamity. Planters feared for their own safety, and trembled at the thought of the appearance of the epidemic among their slaves : merchants engaged in the slave trade were apprehensive that their cargoes of *bales* would be attacked before the sale was effected, but did not care if it happened after the accomplishment of the bargain. There was hardly a house without one

or more sick persons, and the relatives feared that any slight illness, from whatever cause it might have arisen, would promote the attack of the cholera. Physicians, on the other hand, armed with the hard-heartedness, so commonly found among them, were highly gratified; they had not time enough to attend to all the persons wishing their services, and rushed from house to house in search of the fees of the afflicted, the fearful, and the credulous.

Such was the state of things on the 19th day of May, 1850, when late in the evening an alarm was spread throughout the city. Strange, exaggerated, and contradictory rumors were afloat, and nobody could learn, even approximately, what was really passing; but all agreed in one point, which, though new and surprising, was generally believed, viz.: that Narciso Lopez had landed in the island at the head of armed men.

Many, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, went to see their friends. The visitor entered his friend's house under great excitement, and the occupant showed none the less in receiving him. "What is the matter?" inquired they from each other. "I have been told that Narciso has landed in Cardenas; that the soldiers and the whole people have joined him, and that they have started in the cars, and intend to take Matanzas by surprise." "I have been assured," replied the other, "that Matanzas has already been taken; that half the garrison joined him, and that the other half has surrendered. The Governor, they say, has made his escape in a boat."

These words were pronounced in a low tone of voice; at this time another friend, unknown to the former, made his appearance, and they began to speak on things entirely unconnected with the object of their call. Both visitors looked distrustfully upon each other, until the owner of the house, unwilling to remain longer silent,

and being anxious to ascertain what the other knew about the matter, remarked in a very faint tone : " We are all trustworthy What have you heard ?" The latter visitor represented the occurrence in a somewhat new light, and added that news had just arrived of a general rising at Pinar del Rio. " Good ! that is good !" exclaimed the other two : " revolution on both sides, east and west." " Why have not the people of Guanajay risen already ?" " What are they doing at Guanabacoa ?" " They are good for nothing fellows." They accused others of being dull and timid, while they were only waiting for what others would do, and talking on the subject.

At other houses the following inquiries were mutually made : " What will Narciso's plans be ?" " Will he arm our negroes ?" " Why has he not given us notice ?" " What can he do with 500 men ?" " He is a crazy man," answered another. " No one will join him, even if he take Matanzas." " As for myself, he may be sure I would not join him before he has won."

This was the topic of conversation in all the houses of every village and town throughout the island, excepting Cardenas, where the inhabitants fled, and left Lopez and his small army alone to get rid of the Spanish troops who were sent against them.

Fortunately for the invaders, the enemy was not very anxious to fight, and the chiefs were devising means to delay their encounter as much as possible, while the soldiers, delighted as they were with such a course, thought that the pretexts of the chiefs were real and powerful motives, because they prevented their marching at once. Falgueras, then Governor of Matanzas, did not wish to leave the city without a garrison, as he feared that as soon as this should happen the people would revolt, and he was also afraid to meet Lopez in the plain. Falgueras

being a Spaniard, participated in the faults of his countrymen, who when unable to avoid a battle, endeavor at least to hide themselves behind a wall.

He finally started some hours after all was ready, but not wishing to go farther than the Coliseo, he halted, saying to the other officers: "Let us wait until we get news." "Yes, yes," was their answer amidst the greatest joy. This rejoicing, however, was converted into fright at every moment, at the idea that the noise of cavalry, and even of artillery had been heard.

Falgueras looked anxiously towards Matanzas, but did not wish to turn his face towards Cardenas. He was desirous of receiving a message which would have obliged him to return; and for such a message he would have given with pleasure the splendid telescope he held in his hands, which, though handsome, did not allow him to see farther than the hills or the woods. The history of that expensive instrument is singular, and little known, as I believe that three persons only are in possession of the particulars. . . . It cost him nothing, for what is a falsehood to Falgueras? A falsehood which was going to produce such a benefit was, in his opinion, worth telling. Falgueras had borrowed the valuable article from a friend; and being afterwards requested to return it, he coolly answered that on going once into a boat, the instrument had fallen into the sea. Such are the facts, upon the accuracy of which you may confidently rely. Sooner or later, every thing comes to light!

A few remarks on the system followed in my letters, will be found appropriate. Some of those who shall read them, may miss various important facts which are not related, and will also fail to find highly colored pictures and important anecdotes. I acknowledge that some true facts may have been passed unnoticed, for want of sufficiently

strong proofs in favor of their truthfulness, and this is owing to the recent date of most of the events related, and to the want of published statements in whose authenticity we may place entire confidence. These facts, however, must be few, because great exaggerations and even falsehoods, are usually employed to amuse or to attain other ends; and as I am desirous of communicating only what is true, I have been compelled to forego the recital of anecdotes of doubtful accuracy. Should others fill, with incontrovertible facts, the void that I have left, they will do a greater good than by employing falsehood and exaggerations, as such a work would not gain them the least credit. After this digression, let us proceed in the recital of the events that took place at Cardenas.

A studious man named Casaseca was accidentally in the town. This man relates what happened in Cardenas without having witnessed the events. Such is precisely the case with all historians who have not been contemporaries, but they do not represent themselves as eye-witnesses of what they never saw, as has been the case with Casaseca. All that he can say, having due regard to truth, is that he heard the report of fire-arms, and on learning the cause, hid himself in a large store full of empty barrels, and did not go out of it, until the people in the streets shouted at the top of their voices that Lopez had already left.


On the news of the landing becoming known, the inhabitants of the town sought after a safe hiding-place; some rushed to the country, some hid themselves in the holds of vessels, and many closed and barred the doors of their shops and stores. It is said that only a few colored men tendered their services to the gallant General, who did not accept them.

The garrison shut themselves up with their Chief Ce-

ruti; and as Lopez had not time to spare in establishing a siege, a match and a piece of paper were procured, and these articles accomplished without any sacrifice of lives what the most successful assaults would have done. Neither Ceruti nor his companions were Numantines, though they boast of being their descendants; those heroes performed the feat, and the glory they acquired is enjoyed by their descendants, though these latter do not have to follow their example in order to receive it. Such also is the case with persons of *noble* birth, who do not need to act in a *noble* manner, as this was already done by their ancestors. They will continue, therefore, to be *noble*, though their conduct be unworthy and despicable.

The Cuban flag was hoisted, and waved majestically in the breeze, waiting the arrival of those who wishing to be redeemed, would come to take shelter under it against the attacks of despotism and oppression. But nobody was seen coming with that end in view. The invaders considered this a strange occurrence; some time had elapsed and nothing notable had yet happened. Idleness began to look for some pastime, and unfortunately the liquor to which the men had access came to work against Lopez' designs.—“It is a fact, they do not wish to afford us any assistance.”—“We are not doing anything here.”—“Let us return,”—These phrases were heard on all sides, and soon afterwards the soldiers began to re-embark themselves without waiting their commander's orders.

Lopez accompanied by a few Cubans and Americans, were still on shore. This movement was perceived by the enemy, and a body of horsemen and another of guajiros thought that they might with little exertion take prisoners those few who were on the wharf. They started, and cautiously proceeded towards the place. The report of



fire-arms was then heard, several fell dead on the ground, and the soldiers halted. The historical uncertainty begins at this place, as there are numberless rumors which mutually contradict each other. Spaniards consider Carrasco, the pikeman, as a hero, unable as they have been to find another; but the Cubans say that this wretch was so drunk, that instead of rushing to the place where his few enemies were, he went directly into the sea. An American, who had left his companions to meet him, struck him heavily with the breech of his gun; but the rider and his horse proceeded, and fell into the water; whence he was taken out, and died in a few minutes from the effects of the blow; otherwise he would have been drowned.

He undoubtedly did something; and the Spaniards have manifested their gratitude by erecting a kind of mausoleum to his memory. . . . I have not seen it; but they assure me that the place selected for this purpose is situated in the immediate vicinity of a rather filthy spot in the fortress.

Lopez re-embarked at last, yielding to the pressing requests of his companions. The steamer ran aground, and the Spaniards could have made her a prize, if they had only had courage enough to approach her.

The government represented that the invaders had been so closely chased, that they were compelled to re-embark, and that Carrasco had pierced with his lance a large number of enemies. Pictures were ordered to be made, like that which a certain fable relates of a lion which was vanquished by a man; and the newspapers undertook the difficult task of healing with falsehoods the wounds given at Cardenas to Spanish honor.

A wonderful occurrence took place on those days, viz.: the almost entire disappearance of the cholera. It seemed

as if the disease wanted to afford a truce to the Cubans, in order to allow them a better opportunity of running to arms ; the obstacle disappeared, but their dullness continued. They, however, allege several causes which prevented their joining the invaders ; as for instance, that no notice had been given to them of their designs, and that they had been taken by surprise.

LETTER LV.

Second landing of Lopez — A prediction — Lopez before O'Donnell — Appearance of the Pampero — Smuggling merchants — Attack of Las Pozas — Panic of Catalonians on seeing Enna's corpse — Rejoicing of the Creoles — Treachery — Breakfast of Anthropophagi — Rumors — Newspapers.

A FEW days after the events at Cardenas, a conversation was held on the subject in a circle of Spaniards, among whom was a Creole. The first named spoke of the probabilities of another expedition, and the general opinion was that it would not take place. The opinion of the Cuban was asked, and he answered: "Another expedition will land in the island; Lopez will come again, even if he was sure of meeting with death; his honor requires him to do so, and he will do it."

All the Spaniards remained silent, well aware of the truth of the Creole's statement.

Such was precisely the case.

New rumors were soon afloat; the name of the steamer which was to convey the invaders was afterwards ascertained; but the general remark of the Spaniards was that the steps taken by the government were such that they could not possibly escape; and that all those who might attempt to join them would be shot on the way.

An occurrence was then related to Concha, the accuracy of which I do not guarantee. They said that Lopez was once sued before General O'Donnell, who was then Governor. On making his appearance he was not offered a seat, whereupon he took a chair which was near by, and struck the floor so heavily with it, that it broke into pieces. He then kicked the fragments away, and taking another chair, sat down as calmly as if nothing had happened. O'Donnell could not utter a word, and the paleness of death covered his face. Such was the anecdote. Concha considered it true, and on hearing the news of the landing of the hero, he became greatly terrified. The steps he took show that he expected wonderful exploits from the enemy.

The guard in the watch-tower of the Moro-Castle gave notice one morning that the steamer Pampero was in sight, but shortly afterwards, he signalized that she had steered to the west. Indeed, the invaders seemed to have come, in order to give notice to their so-called friends, so that they could not recur to the pretext they had alleged on former occasions.

These friends prepared themselves to learn the news; they all expected to see what "turned out," but nobody acted. The Government officers feared to lose their pittance; the *red* Peninsulars were frightened at the thought of being compelled by the Government to fulfil their promises; the aristocracy, the Creole Counts and Marquises, trembled for the safety of their titles; those who occupied high positions, on account of undeserved patronage, feared that the reign of justice would throw them aside; the merchants engaged in the slave trade perceived over their heads the impending danger of the ruin of their business; those having the flour monopoly imagined that their large profits would no longer be de-

rived ; the planter believed that the decree abolishing slavery would soon follow as a matter of course ; and even those who had been presented with a second-rate cross, did not wish to lose it. All these persons lived on abuses and wrongs, and they wished them to continue. The number of those disposed to carry out the plans of Lopez were few, but those who were really doing something in his favor were fewer still.

The inhabitants of Havana said :—" The citizens of Vuelta de Abajo ought to rise now, as they are near Narciso, and those of Puerto-Principe ought to follow them and join the troops of Agüero." The residents of the above named places, on the other hand, said : " Ten thousand young men from Havana must have taken possession of the capital already, and as many more ought to be rushing to help the invaders, and carry Lopez in triumph to the city."

A procession was seen going to the palace. It was a deputation of those who call themselves merchants, but who are really smugglers, living on depredations committed on the public treasury. Their quality of merchants would require them to desire a free and liberal government, instead of the continuance of the present system by which they can soon make fortunes, while they fear that under a different system of government, their incomes would be materially reduced. Their profits in this business are enormous. The greater part of these merchants were clerks ten years ago, living on small salaries ; now they possess one, or even two millions of capital. There is no pursuit or business of any kind which yields such large profits without capital ; and in order to obtain them, all kinds of frauds, depredations, thefts, &c. must be resorted to.

These merchants walked in a very timid manner ; their

eyes gave strong proofs of a dreadful fright, and their pale complexion was also a witness to their fears. They passed through a dense crowd of Creoles, who filled the portico of the Captain-General's palace, and went to propose to the Governor, who manifested no less trouble and anxiety than they, that they would take charge of the city, in order to enable him to send all the garrison against the invaders, and oppose to their three hundred men an army of ten thousand strong. Concha, on seeing them, could not fail to think that they were unable to perform in a proper manner the services they were offering, and therefore, instead of allowing them to do the city service, replied that he would provide them with arms to go to the field. They did not accept, and returned home to think about the best way of concealing their wrongfully acquired treasures.

Such was the end of the interview between the Captain-General and the *honest men* of Havana; the men whose advice is solicited on all questions of paramount importance to the country, though their interest is in opposition to that of the people, and their knowledge almost limited to the practice of book-keeping, while they have an interest in the continuance of the present régime, though the ruin of the Island be the unavoidable consequence.

Enna at the head of the larger body of troops proceeded by sea to Bahia-Honda. Another body went by the railroad, and before reaching the depot, some of the soldiers fainted, and fell on the ground. Poor wretches! They are weak and feeble on account of the scanty fare on which they live; their chiefs deprive them of their food; and their self-respect and courage disappear on account of the severe beatings they receive from the time they are sworn to follow the banners. They go to the field, however, because they know that behind them the

officers come, and that they would pierce them through with their swords in case of their showing the least symptom of disobedience; but they do not know why, nor what they are fighting for, nor the advantages they are going to derive from victory. They only are well aware that their condition cannot be worse, and their aim is to be disbanded.

They arrived, and were let loose against Lopez; their great number encouraged them, and they made the attack with the intrepidity so common to Spaniards whenever they contend with weak and inferior foes. Indeed they were so numerous, when compared with their enemies, that they ought to have defeated them by blows of their fists only. But to do this, it was necessary to approach them, and this was precisely what they did not dare to do.

As soon as the first discharge was made, the front line of soldiers fell to the ground, and the second refused to place themselves in a spot which had been so deadly to their fellow-soldiers. They discharged their guns, but did not go forward. Their chiefs shouted and bade them to go forward; but they were deaf; their shots were harmless; they did not kill; but every ball from the invaders was fatal to them. At last they stooped, and rushed in search of undulating ground to hide themselves behind the hills; and finally the officers endeavored to escape death by placing themselves behind the soldiers.

The other officers also sustained a large loss, and became as frightened as the private. Enna became indignant, and shouted *Cowards!* &c; but they did not mind his words, and began to weep like children. The officers were anxious to leave that deadly field, and found an excellent opportunity of doing it, in taking away those who had been wounded. They did not return afterwards, and

those who could not adduce this pretext, fled at last together with their chiefs.

What would the fate of Cuba and Lopez have been, if he had taken advantage of this panic and confusion....? Many explanations have been offered to account for his not having done so; the blame is thrown, not on him, but on his men; the Cubans say that the foreign band of the expedition was strenuously opposed to the measure. Where is the truth?

Lopez retired, as his enemy had done; and his despair must have been almost equal to theirs, because the information he had received was discovered to be unfounded, and Crittenden's defection had occasioned a considerable loss in his small army. He was aware that all the troops of the Island were coming against him, and his aim was not to kill, but to take advantage of time and of his position, to enable the boasted patriots to join his banners.

It is notorious that a storm occurred soon after the arrival of Lopez, which spoiled the munitions of the invaders, and disabled them for any further service, at the same time that the followers of Crittenden were murdered to gratify the cannibal Catalonians. A few cartridges were however left, and these put to flight the royalists in a second encounter and killed their general, whose corpse arrived at Havana at eleven o'clock at night.

It is impossible to give an exact idea of the dreadful effect produced on the Peninsulars of the capital by the mere arrival of this corpse. Any person attempting a description of it would run the risk of having his statements considered as hyperbolic, though no one can ever represent in its true light that intense cowardliness and that dreadful fear which took possession of the minds of those who boast so much when they consider themselves in perfect safety. So common an occur-

rence was for them an omen which their religious opinions could not reject, as their creed is a shocking mixture of superstition and atheism.

The rejoicing on the other hand was general among the Creoles, and it was easily perceived in spite of their efforts to conceal it. Thousands rushed to the cathedral to enjoy the pleasure of the spectacle of the corpse which was exposed in the church; and thousands of others celebrated the event in the bosom of their families with a few friends, and with the aid of the bottle and the glass.

But the exertions of the Creoles did not go any further. They had heard a conversation in many circles to the effect that Spaniards used to meet every evening at the "Campo de Marte" to devise means to carry out a plan which, there was every reason to believe, had in view a general slaughter of Creoles. It was also a notorious fact that over one hundred Biscayans, dealers in jerked beef, had armed themselves, and formed a body for the same purpose. Spaniards could do this very easily, as the government did not oppose their designs; they could buy any quantity of powder and balls, while the Creoles were entirely deprived of them, and many did not dare to purchase those articles, for fear of being considered as filibusters.

The news of the ravages of the storm on the small invading army gladdened the hearts of Concha and the Spaniards in general, and the arrival of some prisoners afforded them a practical proof of the accuracy of the information received. The Chief, however, had escaped, and he was the person whom the government most feared: an oppressed country like Cuba only wants *a man*, in order to recover its rights at any time, when the inhabitants are disposed to do so. The *man* was already in the Island, and the despot then had recourse to the amnesty. The parti-

zans of the Governor said that it had been granted through *magnanimity*; but sound minded persons thought that it was a proof of *fear*.

Treachery then sought for a reward, and Lopez was surrendered. On the morning when the pain of death was about to be inflicted on him, a table was set in the house of a Catalonian, who invited many others, and provided, among the dishes of his breakfast, a large glass bowl for the purpose of filling it with the blood of the victim. Their design was at first not to drink it, but to enjoy the smell it exhaled: but it is probable that they would at last have made a cannibal banquet, and that a libation of that blood would have taken place !

The sanguinary wishes of these Catalonians were not carried out on account of the news that was received from New-Orleans, of the great excitement of the people on hearing of the murder of Crittenden and his followers. The Spaniards trembled, and this fear prevented the corpse of Lopez from being cut asunder and dragged through the streets. For the same reason the Catalonians who prepared the banquet did not drink his blood !

A few minutes before the hour of the execution two or three men were seen at a distance from the gallows, and looked as if waiting for some others to arrive, but these never came. It was said that about fifty well armed young men had resolved to meet there in order to make an attempt to save the victim or die in the struggle by his side. But either no such plan was formed, or they did not fulfill their promise. Lopez died alone.

Another occurrence was related which though not well proved, is very likely to have happened, as it is in accordance with Spanish cruelty and injustice. A young man who was found on his way to a plantation a few leagues from Las Pozas was shot on the spot by the

soldiers who suspected that he intended to join Lopez. The same is related of a physician who was going see to his patients, and of several other persons who have disappeared.

The Editors of the newspapers meanwhile used to go to the Captain-General's office to learn the subject on which they had to write. The messages received from the seat of war were not published; the reports which appeared in the public prints were represented as abstracts from those received from the field, but in fact they were entirely false documents, in which the defeats were represented as victories, and the invaders charged with committing *all kinds of enormities*. No Spaniard was ever reported to have died; since the first encounter all the troops of Lopez were flying, &c.; but even the Spaniards threw aside those papers with contempt. It might be as well to remark, that the Editor of one of them is a counterfeiter, who was condemned in Spain to suffer capital punishment, and that another is an equally despicable wretch.



LETTER LVI.

Beginning of the Political Questions — Principles professed by an honest Spaniard — Hatred between Creoles and Peninsulars — Extraordinary assertion — Historical facts of the Cuban revolution — Revolutionary Committee of Havana — New-York Junta.

I SHALL enter now, dear Charles, into the consideration of the political questions concerning this Antille. In order to abridge my letters as much as possible, and to avoid the formation of a large volume, I will arrange and classify the vast amount of data and information gathered on different occasions, and transmit it in a form adapted for your perusal. The subject of our conversations after dinner was on this matter, and though the abstracts I used to make every day were short, the aggregate of them alone would form a bulky book. I will therefore relate here only what is strictly necessary to attain the purpose set forth in my programme.

The saying “tot capita, tot sententiæ,” is generally confirmed in these disquisitions, as almost every individual professes a different system. I will explain to you several of these systems.

The opinions of Don Cosme, who was the only Peninsular in our circle, can be condensed in the following political creed :

“ I was born in Spain,” said he, “ but might as well have been in the middle of the sea ; I am, as it were, a fish of this world, born in latitude some 40 degrees north ; and I believe that if I should take a greater interest in Spanish affairs, than in those of other nations, it would be as absurd as if a person born on board a vessel should entertain towards her a devoted affection. I must do all in my power to promote the welfare of *men* in general, whether they be natives of my own town, or of the farthest corner of Siberia ; as a *whale* of Norway would join another of Patagonia in carrying on a war against the *sharks*. We *must* all be *cosmopolitæ* ; I must like Cuba better than Spain. I left my country because I could not make a living there, and here I have been, and am still, doing very well.

“ I am well aware that very few countrymen of mine profess the same creed ; that nearly all of them hate the Creoles, and that these in return abhor them. In my opinion, both are wrong ; and what I find most singular is, that they allege the same reason for their procedure, viz, : ‘ Because they hate us.’ This is a *circulo vicioso*, and for this reason I say, that none of them act in a proper manner. Cubans, however, may be somewhat excused, because many Peninsulars, on manifesting themselves strong advocates of the Spanish Government, do thereby give a conclusive proof of their enmity against them. The greater part of the Cubans, besides, have not eagerly sought for liberty, nor do they wish in earnest to acquire their independence ; their only desire is to obtain a reform in the system of government.”

This last assertion was always contradicted in the warmest manner by his listeners. He insisted, however, and I will here relate some of the reasons he adduced, as a great amount of facts will thus be furnished to you.

"To wish for independence," said he, "is not what it is generally considered to be. Cubans desire independence, because they know that it is a blessing, and people are always desirous to obtain what is good; but some of these blessings are so valuable, that in order to acquire them, it is not sufficient to wish for them, but we must fervidly long for them, and make great exertions and painful sacrifices to secure them. Few, very few, understand this truth, and I have no doubt that if they would at last become aware of this important fact, the necessary exertions and sacrifices would soon be made. Cubans desire freedom with the lukewarmness of a person who wishes to have some ice-cream, for instance: if the saloon is far off, the enjoyment of the refreshment is foregone; but if the person is fully convinced that it is an indispensable requisite for the recovery of his health, he will travel many miles to take it.

"They generally contradict my statements, and affirm that the coldness of their desires is not so great; but I adduce the recent facts, which are universally acknowledged to be true. The first plan of Lopez was to promote a general revolt of the country; and this was the most approved idea, and the only manner by which anything could have been done. In a few days he found a large number of followers; but when they were required to begin the work, he was left alone. Three or four persons only met at the place appointed for the general rising; and one of them went to say that his child was sick, and could not be left alone; and the other asked to be excused, as his wife was confined, and wanted his assistance.

"Lopez was obliged to fly to the United States to save his life; but despite his recent disappointment, he could not believe that the Cuban people would be satisfied with living in chains and groaning under the weight of oppres-

sion and degradation. This belief was afterwards strengthened by statements made to him, in which the people were represented as being anxious for liberty, but unable to struggle for it. Lopez relied on the truthfulness of this information, and therefore went to Cardenas first, and to Playitas afterwards. In the first named place he saw that the Creoles left him alone instead of joining him, and in the second, he not only received no help, but was assailed by them and their dogs. These facts, however, do not prove what the Spanish Government adduces them for. The residents of cities sympathized with the invaders in general, but their sympathies were so luke-warm, that they did not manifest themselves in any practical manner. The guajiros who persecuted him may be excused, as the Government represented to them that the invaders came for the purpose of robbery, and the *patriots* did not endeavor to undeceive them, for fear of being considered as filibusters. They did not wish to make even the trifling sacrifice of appearing in the light of persons displeased with the Spanish system of Government.

"Lopez, after being taken prisoner, walked several miles escorted by a few soldiers, and not even a dozen patriots endeavored to wrest him from the grasp of his murderers. This is more to be wondered at, when we consider that for doing this, it was not necessary to be a warm patriot: any person of humane feelings, and endowed with sentiments of gratitude, possessing besides some courage and dignity, would have made the attempt. Lopez was exhausted from weariness, hunger and thirst; he walked barefooted for a long distance, limping and bleeding from his lacerated feet; while the soldiers who guarded him embittered his sufferings by insulting and mocking words. That new Christ went alone to his Calvary; nobody acted in the place of a Simon of Cyrene, or of a

- . Veronica towards him. The people whom he came to free witnessed his march to the scaffold ; they heard his affectionate farewell, "*I die for my beloved Cuba !*" and if any sympathies were felt, they were so slender that they were not manifested in either deeds, words, or movements. Shortly before the second expedition landed in the Island several noble-hearted young men at Puerto-Principe did what the whole people ought to have done, viz. : to raise the standard of rebellion. Nobody, however, followed their example ; and even those who had promised to aid them did not come in time to join the revolutionary army. The person who afterwards gave a shelter under his roof to any of those patriots, thought that he had performed a great feat. The surrendering of Armenteros, without having shot a single ball, cannot be accounted for by the stories which were related at the time ; or, as some said, because he expected all the troops to join him ; but by the fact that he found himself abandoned by the patriots. Then, as well as now, *all* expected *others* to do what *all* ought to do.

" After the execution of Lopez, six persons only formed themselves into a club to promote a revolution in the Island. These men heard their friends *speaking* against the Government, and expressing the liveliest desire of acquiring their independence. They placed confidence in their hyperboles ; they thought that the greater part of the people were anxious for freedom, and this brought about a sad disappointment. They still adhered to this mistake, even after experiencing that nobody offered himself to co-operate with them, and that no aid, either personal or pecuniary, was tendered. Had these men withdrawn on seeing this refusal, and the contempt with which the country received the offer of their services, many evils would have been avoided.

"Some, on hearing this reasoning, reply, that those persons did not deserve the confidence of their countrymen ; that, excepting one, who died some time ago, none of the members of the Club were of the first respectability ; and that even that person was not popular as a politician or as an energetic man, but as skilful in his profession. My answer to this argument is very simple : if the people had resolved to accomplish the revolution in earnest, many other persons would have offered themselves besides those few already referred to, who labored besides under the disadvantage of being ruled by immoderate ambition, as they expected to obtain an elevated position after the establishment of the new government. Many other respectable Clubs would have been formed whose labors would have been perhaps more fruitful.

"The only practical result worth mentioning, attained by the labors of this Club, was the conspiracy called that of the Vuelta de Abajo. A few persons engaged in it ; but their number was so small that they did not form any considerable majority of the people, and this fact does not alter in the least my general assertion. Half the persons condemned by the Government were entirely free from all blame."

The facts related in the sequel will show the accuracy of the principles set forth by Don Cosme. "A Junta was formed in New-York ; four of its members falsely represented themselves as appointed by the people ; but the fact was, that no person in the Island, for fear of the risk, dared to make such appointments.

The six members of the Revolutionary Committee of Havana, believing the "Lugareño" an influential person among the people of Puerto-Principe, proposed to him the establishment of another revolutionary Junta in the United States ; but subsequent facts proved that he not



- only did not enjoy this popularity, but also that he did not deserve it. He proposed to his correspondents in Havana two other members for this Junta, one of whom accepted on the condition that the Havana Club would send one of its members to form a part of it, but no one offered himself to go. The conspiracy of La Vuelta de Abajo was then discovered, and Valiente, who was one of them, fearing to be thrown into jail, rushed into a steamer and reached New-York, representing himself as the envoyé of the Club. He then joined the other three, and the one who was appointed by the Cubans in the United States, and the Junta was formed.

“ While this happened in the States, the Cuban Club was dissolved; and the Junta was left with very few correspondents, their letters hardly ever meeting with any answer. This body had in their possession a paltry sum of money, which had been furnished by a few persons of the Island. The Junta issued their manifesto, which did not promote in the least the cause of the revolution.

“ I acknowledge that this document was but a ludicrous parody of the famous “ Declaration of Independence of the United States.” I also agree that the members of the Junta were not more influential than any of the Club; I also grant that the Creoles should not have placed any confidence in parties who asked for money, when those who had done the same before had appropriated to themselves whatever came within their grasp; and lastly, I think that the utter want of established principles to which the Junta would adapt their proceedings did not warrant the residents of the Island in indulging any reasonable expectations of success. We cannot, however, conclude from this that the revolution would have come to a successful termination, if the members and the principles according to which they proceeded, had been good. Logic does not authorize such a conclusion.

"But let us recur to the facts. What were the Creoles doing while those who styled themselves their representatives were issuing manifestoes, sending letters to the Island, and writing *falsehoods* in the newspaper called "*The Truth?*" Many months elapsed, and nothing had yet been done, until a *certain* family in a *certain* town considered themselves invested with the right of deciding on the manner of managing the revolution by the mere fact of having loaned a few thousand dollars for the purpose. The Club of Havana, and even the Junta for the same reason, called themselves representatives of the people, and thought that they had sufficient talent to conduct the revolution, which latter opinion has since been discovered to be entirely unfounded.

"Besides many other things, the aforesaid family required that all the money in the hands of the Junta should be deposited with the General appointed chief of the expedition, whom the Secretary of the Junta represented, without knowing him, as the greatest desideratum of the Cuban patriots. By the mere fact of having furnished the money, they imagined also that they had purchased the right of ordering that the General should have the whole control of the affair. The Junta readily yielded to all these requirements, as its members were satisfied of their own uselessness and utter incapacity.

"The country meanwhile showed the greatest dullness, and nobody thought of a revolt. Many were anxious for the arrival of the expedition, but a greater number still feared the consequences to their lives or property. But even among the above named, very few contemplated taking any active part in the struggle by tendering their personal services to the invaders; but all expected to live and see the change that was going to take place. Some, without even entertaining these desires, affected to pro-

fess them, with the view of acquiring high offices or privileges ; and to this class belonged the larger part of those who contributed money to the undertaking. Others only wished for the expedition in order to revenge themselves upon the Spaniards, at the risk and expense of others ; as they did not care if all the invaders perished, provided a large number of Peninsulars could be killed."

You may easily imagine, dear Charles, the warm discussions to which these assertions gave rise. Many were strenuously contradicted ; and I am certain that if these letters are read by the Cuban patriots who believe that by concealing or altering the facts, the interests of the revolution are to be promoted, Don Cosme's opinions would differ widely from theirs. I do not think, however, that they are far from the truth ; and I firmly believe also that to tell the truth, which is always a duty, is in this case very desirable for the Cuban cause.

LETTER LVII.

Efforts of some Cuban Patriots — Their motives — Strange reasonings — American Sympathies — General unconcern among the Creoles — Its causes — Misfortune — Patriotism of the Cuban ladies — Death of Patriots.

DON Cosme also brought several facts which had been related by Don Placido, to bear in favor of his assertions ; and considering them true and interesting, I think I am warranted in giving them a place in my letters. He said :

“ Many were greatly attracted by the renown of the new General, but all remained quietly at home, adhering steadily to the principle of doing nothing while any hope could be entertained that others would take the risk on their own shoulders. No offers even of money were made until the patriot * * * enlisted in the ranks of the revolutionists, and another patriot, * * *, strenuously exerted himself in carrying out his plans. Several others then followed their example, and some good plans were framed. But, *how many* were these patriots? Very few ; some offered their purses, and a very small number their personal services. The amount collected was short of \$400,000, and the number of contributors, despite the assertions of some, was not over two hundred. Several of these sums were almost extorted from the givers.

" I will not dare to affirm that all persons who tendered this pecuniary aid contemplated making a profitable investment ; but I can assure you that many with whom I am acquainted had no other end in view.

" A conclusive proof of the accuracy of this assertion is, that I have never heard any of these persons uttering a liberal principle ; they manifest generally an unquenchable thirst for riches and privileges ; even in their gestures the despotism under which they have been brought up is manifested : and when they think of liberty, they fancy the enjoyment of this blessing as intended exclusively for themselves, as if freedom did not require a reciprocal regard for every body's rights.

" The worst thing for the cause of the revolution was, that even the slender sympathies of these persons vanished at the moment of their delivering their respective amounts ; they thought that they had done already all that they possibly could ; and instead of continuing to exert themselves, their greatest efforts were directed to conceal the fact as much as possible ; and to attain this end, they divulged discouraging news, and were ready at any time to give to the Government proofs of their attachment. The Government used to take advantage of these declarations, publishing them in order to deceive the people ; though well aware of their want of sincerity, and knowing that they were produced by the most degrading abjectness. Nobody, on the other hand, dared to divulge the true cause of these manifestations."

These were the facts adduced by Don Cosme to prove his assertion " that the Cubans have not, at least so far, endeavored in earnest to free themselves from the Spanish rule." From these premises he also drew the consequence, that nobody had a right to disturb a people who lived satisfied with the manner in which they were go-

verned ; as then the law of the majority, or of doing what the greatest number agrees upon, would be disregarded. Any person attempting this would incur the responsibility of all the evils resulting therefrom.

This opinion caused its author to be looked upon in a rather distrustful manner by the greater part of his listeners. They thought that his opinions were not sincere ; that the principles he uttered were not those that he really professed ; and that he, being a Spaniard, was a partizan of the *statu quo*, as the interest and character of his country were thus promoted and exalted. I consider him, however, a sincere person, though Don Placido very frequently says to me, " If such are the opinions of one of the best Spaniards, what must be those of the others ? "

Don Cosme also thought that we, the Americans, did not feel any sympathy for the Cubans ; but I had the pleasure of seeing that this assertion was promptly contradicted, and many facts were adduced, by which it was proved that a lively interest on the part of our countrymen in favor of the triumph of the Creoles had very often been manifested. I regret that I am compelled to forego the publication of the names of persons which were quoted on that occasion ; but dear lives and a great amount of property are therein involved, and I consider this a sufficient apology for my silence. The mere and well-known fact that many spots of this Island have been moistened with our own blood, puts beyond question the fallacy of Don Cosme's opinion on this point.

He, however, offered an excuse for the conduct of our countrymen ; he said that Americans could not and should not entertain such sympathies, because even the Creoles did not seem to feel them for their own freedom ; that the circumstance of our being far from the country obliged us to form our judgment on the matter only by the facts coming under our notice ; and that these did not warrant

the conclusion that the Creoles were anxious or felt disposed to do all in their power to get rid of the Spanish rule. "The death of Castañeda," said he, "is a very weak protest, which vanishes and disappears among the numberless manifestations of sympathy and attachment which the Spanish Government receives at every moment. The full attendance at the palace on court-days, or when balls are given; the establishment of the new bank; the recent funeral rites celebrated on the death of Tacon and other facts contradict those who rely upon the mere fact of that death. I am well aware that the Government, in its accustomed injustice, would punish all persons who should, even by their silence, show themselves dissatisfied with its authority; but if they fear its persecutions to such a degree, it is fair to presume that the desire of redemption is not very strong. I even believe that by these enormities the hatred of the people against the government would be universal, and that the revolutionists would acquire a greater number of followers. The present behavior of the Creoles does not prove cowardice as much as unconcern."

There can be no doubt that Don Cosme's opinions are in the main proper and judicious. At the ball given by General Concha on the occasion of the last saint's day of the Queen, numerous Creole ladies and gentlemen were present, and appeared *highly pleased*, some with the pleasure of the dance, and others with the *honor* of having been invited. This baseness and degradation was a matter of great surprise to me, but an explanation was offered by some of our circle, who traced the origin of this fault to their bad education and want of learning, and to the vicious examples which are always presented to them, and which are the workings of a degraded and vile government. Very few Creoles have understood yet "how great

is the infamy of those Cubans who are faithful to a throne which is the enemy of their country," as has been said in the "El Pueblo" of New-York; but they neither understand the meaning of the word *liberty*, nor properly comprehend the sense of the terms *baseness* or *infamy*. The exceptions are so few, that very often and in great earnestness I have heard the following astounding device proposed, in order to ameliorate the condition of future generations, namely: "To take from the country all children under *four* years of age, and make the sea cover the whole Island and rise above the surface of the highest mountains, for twenty-four hours." So overcharged with faults and misery is the present generation reputed by some!

My belief, however, is that if this awful calamity should happen in Spain, the measure would be more in accordance with the divine justice, and Cuba would be made independent *ipso facto*, and be obliged to declare itself free.

Another assertion of our friend the Spaniard was acknowledged as true by all the members of our circle. "The patriotism of the Cuban ladies," said he, "is far greater than that of their countrymen; they manifest a more intense hatred to the Spanish government, and have more courage to evince it." Numberless facts which have been related to me, seem to confirm this opinion; but though desirous of giving you an abridged recital of them, the risk of exposing the heroines to the persecutions of the tyrants, obliges me to be silent. I will relate, however, a rather unimportant occurrence from among the many which have come under my notice. History will, at some future day, publish them to the world.

The fact was as follows. A Spanish officer, of the class known among the politicians by name of *red*, was

with his lady in the circle of a Creole family on the evening of the day when Lopez was arrested. Amidst the noise produced by the fire-crackers and fire-arms, with which the Catalonians celebrated that event, a crowd of Spaniards was seen rushing through the street, and shouting at the top of their voices. The lady of the house remarked, "How stupid they are . . . they are all drunk." The officer, wishing to offer an apology, said: "It would not be fair to throw much blame on them to-day, if they have indulged excessively in champagne." "Champagne!" quickly retorted the lady, "all the champagne that there was in Havana was consumed on the day of the *death of Enna*; those beasts have intoxicated themselves with brandy (*aguardiente*)."

Don Cosme did not deny that the Cuban revolution had had its Creole heroes. He referred with pleasure to those who had spilled their blood, and manifested great courage in jeoparding their lives for the cause of Cuban liberty. In the career of several of these patriots, there are very interesting episodes, which I omit relating, because I have noticed several important differences in the particulars of the several recitals of the occurrences, and I would like to avoid, if possible, even a single error in all my letters.

I will only notice a fact, the accuracy of which is acknowledged by all persons. None of the patriots who have died on the scaffold have evinced the least symptom of fear. The mild young man Facciolo, who on account of his tender age might have manifested some faintness, ascended the steps of the gallows, like all others, with wonderful unconcern, giving incontrovertible evidence that neither the awful fate which he was going to meet, nor the hideous appearance of the instrument of death, and all its appurtenances, influenced, in the least, the

state of his mind, or changed the soundness of his reason. This phenomenon, so frequently observed in those who have suffered death from political causes, shows the powerful influence of a satisfied conscience on those occasions. While guilty persons convicted of horrid crimes,—the perpetration of which presupposes personal courage,—faint and manifest great dread on their way to the gallows, the weakest and most fearful patriots have shown on all occasions the coolest unconcern, and thus given at the moment of their death a proof of their utter contempt for the tyrants.

The conduct of many of the so-called patriots after the last unsuccessful attempt to liberate the country, seems to confirm the leading assertions of Don Cosme. Those who exhibited the greatest enthusiasm, have entirely retired from the scene; they are satisfied with the temporary loss of their gifts, as the shares obtained for them have been safely kept; and publicly despise the revolutionists. They have devoted themselves with a base zeal to business pursuits; they flatter their oppressors, and endeavor to impair the reputation of those who were once their fellow-revolutionists; and some engage in the slave trade, though their former opinion was that immense evils accrued to the country from it.

When speaking on these matters, Don Placido frequently exclaimed: "What do these infamous egotists care about the country!"

LETTER LVIII.

Advocates of the Cuban *statu quo* — Condition of the Spanish American Republics — Disadvantages of the Cuban people for self-government — Details of what Creoles require for a liberating expedition — Their hopes in the Spanish Cabinet — Parties in Cuba — Annexationists — Partizans of Independence.

IN one of my former letters I mentioned that another friend of ours, Don Evaristo, was also a strong advocate of the *statu quo* of the Island, and no matter how strange this may appear, we cannot but acknowledge that the reasons on which his opinions were founded are by no means unreasonable.

He thinks that the representative system and the republican régime would be hurtful to Cuba, and that no lover of the country should desire the *tinsel* of independence, when it must be purchased at the high price of the sacrifice of true happiness.

He says that Spanish Americans are not capable of governing themselves, and read an extract from an American newspaper, in order to prove that the Spanish mind is so constituted that it cannot freely and fairly exercise political rights.

He finally quoted a passage from President Belzú's

message, which furnished us with the darkest picture of the present condition of Bolivia ; this must be relied upon, as it has been drawn by an experienced hand.

“ Bolivia,” says he, “ has become incapable of self-government. It contains no abiding element of order. Virtue, which is the soul of republicanism, has made way for a profound and universal demoralization. Patriotism is a mere name. . . . The first of the public evils is the general idleness of the Bolivian people. They despise work, and like to live by obtaining office under Government, or by trusting to find a prize in the lottery of political intrigue. Hence every revolution holds out a hope to them, and they encourage it. They speculate on the ruin of the State.”

When any remark was made to the effect that the Cuban people was perhaps better prepared than others who were once under the Spanish rule, Don Evaristo replied by making a rather gloomy sketch of ancient and modern people, both of whom he charges with the same want of civil virtues, which the President of the Bolivian Republic so much deplores. He adduced, in order to prove the total want of good principles and the ignorance of republican habits among the mass of the Cuban people, the imprudent and unlawful procedures of the late revolutionary Junta of New-York ; and insisted that no institution could be properly carried out among the Creoles, as it was almost impossible to find citizens fit for the purpose ; because true devotedness to the public interests and the public welfare was very seldom practised. “ No guilty person,” said he, “ would ever be punished, if he only had friends ; because they do not pay any regard to an oath, nor do they understand what the duty of jurors is. They would think that in declaring a person innocent, no evil was done to the republic, but a benefit was conferred on the criminal.”

His belief was strengthened by the occurrence of a fact which he related, and which was as follows : a Cuban who had been for many years a resident of New-York, acted once as juror in a grave criminal case. After two hours confinement and deliberation, his patience was entirely exhausted ; and instead of examining closely and carefully into the matter, as was done by his fellow-jurors, he only thought of requesting them to come to *any conclusion whatever*, in order to avoid the inconvenience of delay.

Our other friends bitterly censured Don Evaristo for his opinions. They argued that if he considered the Spanish Government, the worst that could ever rule over Cuba, it was a strange inconsistency not to wish for a change. His reply was, that he would like to have one effected, provided there was no danger of perishing in the mutation ; and that he foresaw a great risk at the moment of establishing a new political system, because, there being no concord or alliance among the Creoles, and nobody wishing to act in a secondary capacity, sufficiently strong forces could never be gathered to check the inroad of other parties. A necessary consequence of the overthrow of the Government, he thought, would be the freeing of the slaves, and this was, for him, the worst evil that could befall the island, "because," said he, "without negroes the agriculture of the country would be ruined, and in a few years it would be a barren desert ; so that the prospects for the sons of wealthy men were misery and starvation, while under the present system they would be rich and probably very opulent."

In regard to the inability for self-government which he imputed to the Cubans, his adversaries replied, that they would become accustomed by degrees to the republican régime, as this was not an exclusive grant made by God to the Anglo-Saxon race ; that the people of the United States

were taught to enjoy freedom, and the Spanish colonists were brought up as slaves; and that no hopes of their becoming capable of exercising republicanism at some future day, should be weakened by the mere fact that thirty years had elapsed without having attained this end. The friend of the *statu quo* smiled, and gave evident proofs of incredulity. He related the following story :

"When Intendant Pinillos was appointed a second time to that office, a certain loafer who was in search of plunder, shouted on the occasion of his installation with a loud voice, "*Long life to the great Count of Villanueva.*" The Intendant heard this flattery, was pleased with it, and rewarded his behavior by appointing him to the first office left vacant under his administration; but the abuses and depredations which the scoundrel committed were so flagrant that Villanueva, despite his efforts, was compelled to take into consideration the complaints made against his proceedings, and remove him from the office. This would probably be the case with all officers appointed by the Cubans."

Don Evaristo wished for a revolution, provided his plans would be strictly followed, which he acknowledged himself to be almost impracticable. A large invading army, ten thousand strong at least, should land at the same time in two places in the Island, to the east and west of the capital, having excellent chiefs and a strong body of artillery. "This is the only manner," he added, "of rousing the sympathies of the Creoles, who would then join the ranks of the invaders; the Spaniards would do it also for dread and for fear of losing their property; and the Government would become suddenly powerless, while the negroes would have no time or would not be allowed to think of a revolt. The change would be like that effected in the decorations of a theatre. And if this is not possible, the

best thing that the Cubans can do is to remain still, to suffer patiently, and to wait." But when questioned about what the Cubans had to wait for, he answered :

" Those who have endeavored to promote the revolt, have caused our evils to be greatly increased. Under the pretence of liberating us, they wished to secure high positions for themselves ; they represented themselves as the expounders of our own wishes, without knowing them, or having been invested with the charge of doing so ; and considering themselves possessed of great talents, without any foundation for the assumption, proclaimed that the people were in the wildest state of excitement, and falsely asserted that they relied on the efforts of numerous persons in the Island who were ready to help them. The blood-thirsty inclinations of our cruel oppressors were thus awakened, as well as their suspicion and fears. The cowardice of the Government has been the cause of the intolerable measures adopted in late years ; and Concha has taken advantage of this to suit his private views. He represents himself as needful for the continuance of the Spanish dominion in the Island, and the stupid officers of the Crown are made to believe that the number of revolutionists throughout the country is boundless. But it cannot be long before those officers will become convinced that there are not over half a dozen true republicans in the whole people, and that all other Creoles and Spaniards only seek for their own profit and advantage. Finally, that the great bulk of the people entertain the same opinions that I have expressed, with only this difference, that they do not say it boldly as I do. As soon as the officers become fully satisfied of this truth the present régime will be changed ; the useless watchfulness now practised by the Government will cease, as well as their unjust vexations and enormities, and we shall live as our

forefathers did; we shall be buried by their side, and our children perhaps will be fortunate enough to see better times than those we have enjoyed."

It was highly amusing to hear Don Evaristo defending his system from the attacks of his friends. In one of my forthcoming letters I will relate the reply of the Filibuster on that point relating to slavery; and I will here make an abstract of the remarks he made on the several political parties.

Many names were quoted to prove that there were in Cuba more republicans than Don Evaristo imagined; and this gave rise to a minute examination which was made of the lives of such persons. A considerable number of biographical sketches thus fell into my possession, and as they are very interesting, I will, perhaps, venture to publish them at some future day. For the purposes of my letters, however, it will suffice to say, that the discussion of this matter lasted for several days, and that at the end of this time, fewer true republicans still than those mentioned by Don Evaristo were duly recognised as such. In almost every instance the party had entered the revolutionary career from a personal interest, either to avenge himself on some person, or to revenge some offence received: others who represented themselves as advocates of the republican system, did not profess its maxims, nor were they acquainted with its principles: but had heedlessly involved themselves in the revolution to such a degree, that they were unable to draw back without injuring their character. They never professed any love to liberty, as a great good, but as one of the means to which they might recur in order to rise from nothingness into power, or to obtain in after life high offices and elevated positions.

In regard to those who call themselves *pure independ-*

ents, I may confidently remark, that very few understand or can explain what they wish, for they take for granted that anarchy in its most deplorable shape would bring its disgraceful effects over the land, and yet they do not think of devising some means to prevent this evil. Don Evaristo compared these men to riders who should jump upon untamed horses without even bridling them. "Independence and a Democratic Republic," said he, "would be great blessings to Cuba, if the people were prepared to enjoy the benefits accruing from them; but under the present circumstances they would become great calamities, which would either destroy us entirely, or lead us into anarchy and despotism." On hearing these remarks, Don Placido replied, "We are under a despotic government, and our condition can never be worse; the people cannot be taught freedom in the school of slavery." "But we must take into account," Don Evaristo answered, "that we may meet with our ruin on the way." "Better to die," replied the Doctor, rather excited, "than to live dishonored."

These discussions were wont to end with a general silence; and after a short while of high internal excitement, Don Placido would strike the table with his fist, and exclaim, like Narciso Lopez, in a sorrowful voice: "Ah Cubans!"

LETTER LIX.

Abolition party in Cuba—Expediency of abolishing slavery— Slavery in the United States — Arguments against it refuted — Imaginary freedom of Sparta — Wrong principles of the Cuban revolutionists — Discord among the Creoles.

I **SHOULD** not, perhaps, make any mention of the Cuban abolitionists ; for they are so few that they can hardly be considered as forming a party. My friend Joseito is an advocate of these principles.

In his opinion, motives of mere interest and expediency should recommend the abolition of this institution, even if no attention be paid to the claims of humanity, or to the injustice of slavery. "In countries," said he, "where this institution exists, no freedom can be enjoyed ; improvement is slow and uncertain, as little confidence can be placed in the continuance of public peace. For evidence of this, look at the Southern States of the confederacy of North America. The white man is deprived in them of many rights which he enjoys in the northern part of the Republic ; the freedom of the press, for instance, is visionary ; for any person who should dare to publish a paper advocating abolition principles, would not live twenty-four hours. Even in the populous cities, the inhabitants do not feel safe, and their uncertainty and uneasiness are founded on the hatred of the male and female

servants, who necessarily live in the greatest intimacy with their masters, and are the perpetrators of the treacherous murders which are every day committed. Finally, it is easy to conceive that no improvement of any consequence can be carried on in a country deprived of freedom and tranquility, and this is fully confirmed by experience, as it has been observed that the slave states remain comparatively stationary when compared with the northern ones."

In order to object to the first assertion of the Filibuster, one of our friends adduced the saying of Plutarch, who affirms that in Sparta the free men were *exceedingly* free (*málista eleútheroi*), though there were slaves *exceedingly* debased; as if meaning to say, that in other countries the free were less free and the slaves more oppressed than those of the aforesaid republic. Joseito seemed to be overwhelmed by the weight of an authority that entirely destroyed the foundation of his system; but he might have answered the argument by simply remarking that Plutarch called that freedom which would not now be considered as such, as the restrictions upon liberty in Sparta were numerous and burdensome. The necessity of entering into the bonds of wedlock, and the prohibition of freely disposing of their property, are sufficient arguments in proof of this opinion. He might have argued also that their form of government has been properly classified as composed of aristocratical, democratical and monarchical elements; and lastly, he might have reminded his opponents that the senators were called either *kúrioi kai déspotai tes póleos* or *kúrioi megálon kríseon*, and that there were established differences of rank. The foregoing remarks go to show that the greatly boasted freedom of Sparta was not even a shadow of that which is enjoyed in the United States of North America.

Joseito, nevertheless, insisted and said that the fact

quoted could hardly be understood, as the rights of citizens in Sparta must have necessarily been limited, in a considerable degree, in order to secure the public peace, as is done in modern republics. In applying his principles to Cuba, he concluded that the abolition of Slavery was one of the pressing wants of the country, not only as a means of overpowering those parties who were opposed to the formation of a republic, but also for its maintenance after being once established.

"The idea of liberating Cuba," said the Filibuster, "can only be carried out when the aid of the slaves has been secured by offering them their freedom, and an equality of political rights with the free colored people. The means heretofore employed have been of the most absurd and nonsensical description."

Joseito also had recourse to the statistics of the Island, to strengthen his assertions, guessing approximately at those data on which there was any uncertainty. He reckoned the whole white Creole population of Cuba at not over four hundred thousand, of which one-half were women, and of the balance about forty or fifty thousand only were considered able to take the field. The opposition which this force would encounter, consisted of sixty thousand Spaniards and twelve thousand regular soldiers, who had in their hands, besides the castles and fortresses, the naval forces and the prestige of authority. All these circumstances, he thought, insured to the Spanish Government a decided superiority over whatever plans the Cubans might devise.

The disagreement or want of concord among the Cubans must, in the opinion of the Filibuster, be also taken into consideration; as every body wishes his own plans to be adopted, and refuses to alter them in the least. A similar disagreement also prevails among their adversa-

ries, and might probably appear even more violent at the beginning of the struggle ; but it would not be wise for revolutionists to place any reliance on this element. A powerful invading army was needed to compensate for these disadvantages ; but no hopes of success could be entertained, if through an undue reliance on the liberal part of the Creole population, a smaller force should land in the country.

These assertions were made by Joseito, taking for granted that the colored population, whether free or slave, would remain neutral ; but he affirmed that this was impossible, that they would be on the side of the government, which would ~~take~~ advantage of every thing available, as has been already pointed out, and that the result would be the formation of an empire of blacks like that of Hayti.

The Filibuster explained that he had at first sympathized with those who were forming expeditions, because he believed that they professed these principles ; but on learning their true plans he had no longer wished for the arrival of the invaders. He thought that the blunders of the Cuban Junta of New York had been aggravated by the requirements of those planters, who made grants of money in order to have the control of the affair entirely, and wrecked the whole concern ; that the impossibility of organizing and conveying from the United States an expedition of four or five thousand men, was clearly seen by those who were not too blind or stupid ; and that this fact proved that those who insisted on this as requisite did not really desire a revolution, but had made the sacrifice of their money in order to be reputed as patriots, and to satisfy their covetousness or ambition.

What struck me more particularly in the reasonings of Joseito, was their generous and disinterested character.

Though the greatest part of his father's wealth consisted in slaves, he was satisfied with the adoption of a system by which he would be deprived of them. This procedure is more praiseworthy still when we remember that the emancipation of slaves very seldom occurs in Cuba, where they publicly shout that the abolitionists are those who have no slaves, and where they *censure* the disinterested procedure of Joaquin Agüero in setting all his slaves at liberty.

How beautiful, how lovely my young friend seemed to me when he uttered thoughts which could only emanate from a noble and generous heart! In a conversation with another young man of selfish feelings, I heard him making the following remarks. In his face I could easily perceive the purity of his soul, while that of the other colloquist gave evident proofs of baseness and degradation:

"What do I care for the country," remarked the latter, "there is no other positive happiness than that derived from riches." "Well, live, if you choose, to make money," answered he, "and gratify your savage pleasures, and you will soon find yourself plunged in weariness and self-loathing; teach your children the same principles, in order to make them as useless to mankind, and as miserable as you are. Bequeath large sums of money to them; and if any of them ever come to understand that they owe it to you that they are dragging out a wretched and despicable life, their just imprecations will be heard by you in the grave."

L E T T E R L X .

Advocates of a new political régime under the Spanish rule — Advantages which Spain would derive from this system — Principles on which the new régime might be founded — True freedom of the Press — Golden dream.

THE NUMBER of persons who profess Joseito's opinions is, as I before remarked, very small; but my friend Don Antonio, on the other hand, represents a large class in the community. Indeed, the number of Creoles who would be satisfied with obtaining certain grants from the mother country, is very large. Some require that Spain should invest the people with all the rights that belong to them, while others would be glad to obtain from the Spanish cabinet some new regulations beneficial to the country; and both think that the evils consequent upon a revolution might thus be avoided.

Don Antonio believes, however, that the more freedom these regulations allowed, the more beneficial they would be to the colony, and to the mother country also; and he maintains that if Spain would place the Island on an equal footing with Canada in its relations with England, all hopes of annexation would be entirely banished. He is also warmly opposed to annexation.

He asserts—and the arguments he adduces are of the most satisfactory character—that the possession of Cuba is at the present time an evil, instead of a benefit, for the

Spanish nation. "The income," he says, "derived from enormously heavy taxes, which oppress the people, is barely sufficient to meet the expense occasioned by the warlike system under which we live; and in a short time no balance will be left to be sent to the Peninsula. The possession of the Island is only advantageous to the government officers, and to those merchants of Santander or Catalonia who enjoy the monopoly of the Spanish trade. The nation derives only a very trifling portion of the immense benefits which a small number of persons obtain from the Island.

The profits derived by the mother country would be still greater even if the flour trade, and that from other Spanish merchandise, were entirely suppressed, on account of the competition in the United States. In regard to the first named traffic, I acknowledge that as soon as the protective tariff should be abolished, the profit on each barrel would be less than that obtained now; but I also maintain that there will always be some gain, and that if proper attention is paid to the packing, &c., the importation of this staple will increase, because the present inducements for the extensive smuggling of American flour practised by the Spanish merchants will cease, and both will then freely contend in the market.

"The trade in other products of Spain will not suffer by this régime, nor will its influence be felt unfavorably, either by the manufactures and wines of Catalonia, or by the staples of other provinces. Besides, the Cubans are accustomed to many of these articles, and as it will not be easy to replace them with those of other countries, the demand for them would increase in the same ratio with the wealth and population of the Island, which are now stationary, on account of the heavy taxation, and the incessant fear of a revolution.

"Other important advantages would also be derived from the adoption of this plan. The numerous soldiers who die every year in Cuba, after their arrival from Spain, would be saved; the dangers of the seas would be avoided, as well as the ravages of the yellow fever and other epidemics; and the emigration of a large number of Peninsulars, whereby the manufactures and agriculture of their country necessarily suffer, would cease."

I will not trouble you with a minute description of all the benefits which, according to Don Antonio, Spain would derive from following his system, and giving Cuba all possible freedom. One other advantage, however, I will here refer to, viz.: **THE GLORY**. "By adopting these measures," said he, "the glory of Spain would be highly exalted, and she would conquer the sympathies of contemporary nations; while her stubbornness in keeping the Island in her possession by means of armed forces and oppression, will not only cause the total loss of the colony, by its annexation to the United States, but will darken still more the hideous picture which Spain painted of herself three centuries and a half ago, when she was seen depopulating a whole continent of harmless people, either stabbing them for pleasure, burying them in the mines, or throwing them to the dogs."

While dwelling upon this matter, Don Antonio was on fire with a religious enthusiasm, and exclaimed: "This crime, this awful crime of murdering millions of innocent people, has no parallel in the annals of history; it is necessary that Spain should atone for this crime, as the Divine Justice cannot leave it unpunished. If the perpetrators have already died, their posterity are equally to be blamed, because they strive to take advantage of what their predecessors have done.

"Spain has also committed a great crime. She has

not fulfilled the most obvious and sacred duties of a Government. Instead of promoting the welfare of her people, and having no other end than their happiness, her only object is to derive every possible advantage from them. In the Indian Code, indeed, many wholesome laws were enacted, and in their preambles many philanthropic sentiments are uttered ; but no steps were ever taken to carry them out, and those who enacted them sometimes profited by their infraction. The laws may not have been accompanied by orders to the Viceroys not to observe them, such as are now sent to the Captain-Generals of Cuba, yet their infringement was not noticed, because the same galleon which conveyed the news of the abuse, carried presents from the officer who committed it."

According to his belief, therefore, Spain might keep the Island in her possession forever, or at least for a very long lapse of time, by a proper and judicious system of administration. To explain minutely all the reasons which Don Antonio adduces, would be a long and tedious task ; but I will here refer only to the leading points, as he, taking into consideration the circumstances of the country, believes that the system of government practised in Canada is not entirely applicable to Cuba.

He does not wish for a sudden political change, but is desirous of having it effected in a very slow and gradual manner. He proposes, for instance, that the heads of all the families in the different districts of the country should appoint electors, who in turn should choose one hundred representatives, to constitute the Legislature of Cuba, whose sessions should be held in Havana. The Government should carefully avoid influencing these elections in the least, and should limit itself to keeping the peace.

On the same day when the elections were to take place, the unrestricted freedom of the press should be

recognized. Don Antonio thinks that without an untrammelled press no improvement could be effected, because it would be absolutely essential for the discussion of all questions of administration in a country full of abuses and long-cherished prejudices. "It is true," said he, "that it would open the gate for a flood of slanderous, base and revengeful publications; but this is a necessary evil in order to attain the desired end. The first advantage to be derived would be an entire reformation of the conduct of all officers, including the Captain General. The public would soon become accustomed to suspend its judgment when an accusation was made; the person accused of having committed any crime was at liberty to defend himself from unjust attacks, and the one who had done wrong would suffer the punishment of his misdeeds." My friend believes that all laws restraining or controlling the press are hurtful to liberty, and tend to injure the usefulness of this powerful agent; and that no perfect freedom is enjoyed in the United States so long as prosecutions for *libels* can be brought against the editors of newspapers. The Cuban Legislature would begin its labors by forming the constitution of the Colony, without any other restrictions than recognizing for the present the dependence of the Island upon the mother country, and acknowledging the Captain Generals as chiefs of the Executive. This should not prevent, however, the constitution from freely prescribing suitable restrictions and limits to the powers of these functionaries.

The exposition of the reasons for the regulations of this code, openly and freely laid before the public, as well as the discussions in the assembly, and in the newspapers, of all matters of public interest, would enable the home government to acquire a full knowledge of the circumstances, and acquiesce or not, partially or totally,

in the requirements of the new colonial constitution. In that manner only can Spain ascertain the wants and necessities of Cuba, and apply the proper remedy.

Don Antonio does not dare, however, to mention any basis on which the Constitution should be founded. He wishes only that the best elements should enter into the composition of the Legislative body; as, for instance, that all the interests of the Island should be duly represented; and that no person be appointed a member who has not a lively interest in the welfare of the country; and he trusts that all this, aided by freedom of speech and unbounded liberty of the press, will make the new code liberal, just and expedient.

He pointed out, though with some hesitation, several leading points which should be embraced; as, for instance, the gradual abolition of slavery, and he also affirms that the adoption of a new political principle, which I also recommend, would be highly useful to the country. He thinks that liberty should not be *for all*, as is generally believed, but only for *those who deserve it*; and that laws highly restrictive and severe should be enacted against the abuses of public officers, and their various depredations. Our great republic, he believes, will not last very long, if proper and efficacious measures are not adopted to suppress the corruption and immorality which have become universal. I was highly alarmed at his gloomy prediction, and denied this universality of corruption, though acknowledging that this evil is general; but he alleges facts which, indeed, I am unfortunately unable to refute, as for instance, the heavy expenses incurred by candidates for office to secure their election, the favorable change in the financial affairs of all those who obtain any office; and what is perhaps still worse, the barefacedness of the speculators, who often boast of

having made fortunes by a system of bribery and spoliation. This evinces, he thinks, a great unconcern in the mass of the people for the public welfare ; hence a want of patriotism, and without this no republic can exist.

Considering that the best laws are of little practical advantage, if those who are charged with their execution are not *good men*, my friend does not approve of a popular election of judges, though he does not wish to have any of the legislative or executive officers invested with judicial functions. In regard to other officers, he proposes that the principles of our constitution, in this respect, should be adopted, and therefore, that all those of importance should require to be approved. He proposes that the Executive should nominate several persons for each office, of whom one should be chosen by the Legislature.

My friend also approves of our system of not nominating persons to any office for life ; and he would also prefer that no offices should be profitable, but only remunerative, unless they were of a nature to require long preparatory studies. A reasonable allowance for the time and labor devoted to the fulfilment of their duties would be all that he would grant.

Don Antonio strongly recommends the meeting of the Cuban Legislature, as the only means by which Spain can become acquainted with the true wants of the colony. For the rest, he said that all this was a golden dream, and that he had no hopes of ever seeing it realized. He affirmed that Spain would never adopt it, for the very reason that it was good ; for it seems that fate, in order, perhaps, to punish the former crimes of that nation, has provided that she should always go wrong, and that all her measures should be blunders and mistakes.

The idea of having the Island annexed to our confede-

racy excited the anger of my recomendado. He agrees that this event is very generally anticipated, but affirms that annexation would be highly mischievous, because our political body is entirely vitiated, and instead of bettering the condition of those who should unite with us, would still further spoil and corrupt them.

Would to God that the assertions of this good patriot might prove false ; and I sincerely hope that our upright citizens will exert themselves to remedy this evil, which he thinks has no other source than the excessive desire of indulging in profusion and display, and of establishing some claim to aristocracy. "A thirst after petty distinctions," said he, "is a conclusive proof of the want of real merit, which must be founded on true patriotism. The object of these so-called patriots is not to do good to the country, but to acquire riches. Their cupidity leads them into corruption and all kinds of crimes, and a republic of degraded persons cannot be great, powerful, or durable.

"The improvements made in the social condition of the present generation would, indeed, enable Cuba to govern itself, independent of both Spain and America ; but though acknowledging this in due form, I cannot help thinking it would be rather difficult for Cubans to abandon their long-tried and familiar track to take a new one. But even supposing this to take place, would it follow that the Island must be hostile to her *then* benefactress Spain ? If she should be so at the present time, she would be hostile to her enemy ; but if she were indebted to her only for benefits received, we must conclude that such a separation would be by no means probable, and that if it ever comes to pass, it will be in a friendly manner."

LETTER LXI.

Don Placido's System — Passion does not allow Spain to see the justice of the claims of Cuba — Revolution is unavoidable — The political problem — Weakness of the Spanish government — Chances in favor of the triumph of the Republicans.

DON PLACIDO thinks that the plans and opinions professed by Don Antonio may be properly called dreams, for they will never be realized, not only because Spain never does what is best for her, and in accordance with her duties, but on account of that hatred referred to by Don Cosme, which she has always entertained towards her Colonies. Even if Spain should become satisfied that Don Antonio's system was the most advantageous for herself, she would never follow it, as far as it is also beneficial to the Island.

Besides the causes of that hatred already enumerated, we may mention another, viz.: their anger that Cuba does not yield them as much as they wish, without perceiving that no one but themselves is to blame for their own bad administration; and yet impeaching the revolutionists, as if they had not in view the improvement of their condition, when desirous of separating themselves from a Government so different from what they need.

Spain fears, on the other hand, not to be able to main-

tain her dominion; that the views of the United States may be carried out; that the late events at Nicaragua may encourage the revolutionists, and that if only a thousand Creoles should raise the standard of rebellion in different parts of the Island, they would receive substantial aid from several quarters, and successfully end the revolution. But these fears, instead of inclining her to think on these matters with coolness and judgment, only increase her blunders and mistakes.

Don Placido believes that "if the majority of Cubans have not yet wished for independence, they will very soon become anxious to obtain it, and that their exertions will be so strenuous and powerful, that a larger army than that which garrisons the Island could not control them, because despair oftentimes accomplishes wonders. The hopes of the despots in Cuba are founded on the belief 'that those who support them are more numerous than those by whom they might be attacked; that the first named possess means of which the latter are destitute; and lastly, that they might have recourse, in any emergency, to all available means, and would call to their aid the efforts of the negroes.' Even taking all this for granted, the conclusion would be that Spain will, at all events, lose the Island.

"She will not, nevertheless, attain her leading purpose: the pleasure of seeing Cuba converted into an empire of blacks will never be enjoyed by Spaniards. They will, indeed, lose the country, but it will happen through her annexation to the American confederacy, whose people would not hesitate to come *en masse* to prevent the establishment of a Government within so few miles from their coasts, which would endanger the peace and tranquility of their Southern States. England may threaten as much as she pleases, but she never will nor can come to a con-

flict with the Northern Republic, on account of any system of government which might be established in one of the Antilles.

“And how many Cubans, dissatisfied with the present government, may be supposed to exist? I have already asserted that if there are only one thousand now, that is sufficient; there would be two thousand next month, and five thousand the next. But even two hundred, if resolved to do so, are enough to destroy the Spanish government. It is not necessary that they should defeat the government troops, nor form clubs, nor appoint juntas, nor make up and organize battalions or companies. The outcry of revolution raised by a hundred men on the East side of the Island, and echoed by another hundred on the West, would accomplish far more than those may imagine who do not know or have not thought of the weakness of the government. These two hundred men, though deficient in skill or courage, would, before perishing or being sacrificed, strike a fatal and deadly blow to the Spanish dominion.”

The Doctor believes that that blow would long since have been struck if the New York Cuban Junta had not been established: the Cubans remained inactive because that body falsely represented to them that they were laboring with complete success, and when they became entirely undeceived, and were preparing themselves to do something, the same Junta misled them again, promising to tender substantial assistance. In this manner the Junta broke up the plans of the Cubans, and caused the death of many good patriots.

The said Junta proclaimed the principle of “vanquishing or dying in Cuba,” but their true programme was “either to go safe, or not to go.” This was the reason why they heard with pleasure all those plans

founded on an armament of thousands of men, an idea far removed from all possibility, and rejected the proposals of those who were ready to go with a small expedition. They feared that the glory would then be won by others, and as they did not wish the freedom of their country if it was not obtained through them, the triumph of the latter patriots was steadily opposed by the members of the Junta.

These have indeed been great evils, but they have yielded some good, as the country has learned the uselessness of some men, the treachery of others, and the interested views of many more, all of which, probably, would have formed afterwards part of the government, and would have proved a great drawback to the progress of the country.

"On no occasion have I experienced," said Don Plácido, "a more lively pleasure, than when I learned the breaking up of the last expedition, with the sole exception of the news of the progress of Walker in Nicaragua, which we received shortly afterwards. I knew the members of the Junta beforehand, and expected nothing good from three of them. I saw with uneasiness that those who did not know them hoped to see something accomplished by their efforts; and when they were entirely undeceived, I was freed from a heavy burden.

"One of the principles which the Junta advocated was, that only those who purchased bonds had the right of conducting the revolutionary movements; but even thus the evil would not have been so great if these purchasers had been true patriots, whereas experience shows that they were only speculators. Their subsequent conduct evinces that their aim was to perform a good mercantile operation.

"The control given to these parties was the source of

the most disgraceful results, for many of them made their grants of money, and at the same time prescribed rules not in accordance with the general interest, but with their own private views. They insisted upon having a powerful invading army, and this being a gratification to the members of the Junta, who wanted to feel perfectly safe, no efforts were made to undeceive them, and demonstrate how nonsensical their requirements were, but on the contrary they were deluded with impudent falsehoods."

My friend thinks that long before the establishment of the New York Junta, it would have been easy to organize and send expeditions under the command of chiefs who had the most valuable quality that could have been desired, viz.: a willingness to sacrifice their own lives. But the men who possessed the means of doing this, never thought of it; they and their friends considered it expedient to avoid the sacrifice of lives and money, for they imagined that this would prevent their receiving any farther pecuniary support, when precisely the reverse would have happened. It is, indeed, very likely that an expedition of two hundred men would have perished at last; but how many lives, and how many thousands of dollars would those few have cost to the government?

If, in the meantime, another hostile body had made its appearance in a remote district a general rising would have taken place, or at least the Island could be proclaimed in a state of revolt. This would promote the landing of other auxiliary invading corps, because the Cubans on seeing that the money they sent was really devoted to the purposes for which they intended it, would not suspect their agents, as they do now, of any wastes or depredations; and the Americans, not only the sympathizers but

the speculators also, would not hesitate to invest their capital in an enterprize which they saw in full operation.

It might seem ludicrous to ascribe so great an importance to two small bodies of two hundred men, on the opposite ends of the Island, and subject to the assaults of a large army ; but we must remember that the government officers only would be on the side of the latter, as the Spaniards themselves will reflect seriously before making any sacrifices.

Nor would a very considerable number of troops be sent against the patriots, as the fears of a revolt does not allow the Government to leave the principal places of the Island without a garrison. The destruction of two bands of patriots would involve such heavy losses in the ranks of the royalists, that it may not be considered too great an exaggeration to affirm, that no great number of cartridges would be necessary to put an end to them. The heat in Cuba is deadly for Spanish soldiers—they have only to remain a short time exposed to the sun's rays to meet with a certain death.

There are some places in the Island which might shelter a dozen men against the attacks of a whole army. The existence of the *palenques* fully proves this assertion. A few half-naked negroes have for many years frustrated the attempts made by the Government to subdue them. There are also some woods whose soil has never been trodden by the human foot, and into which the troops would never be able to penetrate.

The weakness of the Spanish Government is clearly proved by the time taken and the labor spent in destroying any party of highwaymen. Some of them have been carrying on their depredations for years, even in the vicinity of populous cities ; and if such is the case with men who meet everywhere with foes and opposers, it is

fair to presume that the same at least would happen with those who would easily find friends and followers.

The independence of Cuba, even without receiving any help from the Administration of the United States, is, in Don Placido's opinion, not only possible, but also an easy and brief affair. Insurrections, skirmishes, general warfare against the partizans of the Government, and rewards and support to the friends of the revolution, such are the basis of his system.

Many lukewarm patriots, who think others are like themselves, believe that the first insurrection would be difficult, though they agree that this once done there would be no lack of followers. My friend grants, for argument's sake, and to avoid all errors in his plans, that this objection may be a serious one, and overcomes it by bringing from abroad the small body who should first start the revolt, and the other also, to second the plans of the former, in a distant place. One hundred dollars will pay all expenses for arming and conveying to the Island each sharp-shooter, and it is likely that before being killed, he would cause ten or twenty royalists to bite the dust.

The command of this expedition should be offered, in preference to all others, to Cubans who would be willing to die in the struggle. The organization of the people should be made beforehand; but it is not necessary that everybody should know the time and place of the arrival of the invaders. If three, five, or ten persons in each town have an understanding to begin to act as soon as the landing should take place, that is all that is needed. These agreements or understandings can be very easily and safely made, as a trustworthy friend is never wanting.

The skirmishes, no matter how small, would yield satisfactory results, and if occasionally united, or working by mutual combination, they might accomplish some im-

portant operations. A few horsemen, well acquainted with the woods and by-ways, would not only destroy all soldiers straggling from the ranks, but could also devote themselves to raising levies, who would increase the ranks of the invaders, and act in the capacity of advanced guards to their troops. Any small party of patriots would be sufficient to put in revolt all the slaves of a large estate, as was done by Bolivar with his own negroes, and to repel, at their head, the attacks of a proportionate body of royalists, or to take possession of commanding positions and prevent or retard their advance.

"The government will certainly do the same; they will follow the example of Lord Dunmore, who thought it possible to defeat the Americans in their war for Independence, by employing these means; but in this the Spaniards will be as unsuccessful as the English Lord. The slaves once emancipated, a part of the problem will be clearly solved, viz: "Spain will lose the Island."—The other part will then remain to be made out; "Will Cuba fall into the hands of the Creoles or into those of the negroes?" Don Plácido considers the question as settled in favor of the former, though the latter seem to have in many particulars the best prospects for success. In my opinion, as soon as the government should proclaim the freedom of the slaves, another solemn outcry, similar to that raised throughout the United States after the battle of Lexington, would be heard; "War has begun." To which the universal response was, "To arms, then! liberty or death!" An outcry which told the doom of their oppressors.

"The news of the revolution in Cuba would bring to her shores many Walkers and Kinneys; and there would also be new skirmishers; many who are neutral now would openly advocate the plans of the invaders, and

many others who are at present indifferent, would tender substantial aid. Even the Spaniards would seriously think on the probabilities of any *reimbursement* being made to them by Spain, if they should lose their property and lives in the defence of her cause. The number of living soldiers left at the end of four months, after uninterrupted marches and counter-marches, would be so small as scarcely deserving to be taken into consideration.

"The Independence of Cuba would be inevitable, and if the Spaniards should seek to re-enact the bloody and cruel regulations observed in their old American wars, it is much to be feared that they would not obtain from the Creoles, as they did from the mercy and forbearance of Sucre in Ayacucho, a capitulation after being vanquished, as the struggle would be short, and there would be no time to pacify the just resentment which such system would arouse. It is very likely that they will resort to this inhuman extremity, but as their tactics are already known, it is easy for their opponents to adopt them also. Those who practice magnanimity towards the Spaniards clearly evince that they do not know them; as the Peninsulars believe that it is a proof of cowardly fear, and not of generous courage, and it is necessary that the republicans should only wait for the first excess on their part, and then act without any regard to the feelings of humanity or benevolence."

Such are the opinions of my friend, and the facts which I have been able to gather, go to show that the reprisals of the Creoles are likely to exceed those of the Spaniards, even taking for granted that the former possess, as I am assured they do, means of destruction which the latter are unacquainted with. It is also probable that in the destruction of property the Peninsulars would suffer far more injury, as their interests are intimately connected with those of the Creoles.

The Cubans being once made independent should deliberate with calmness and judgment upon establishing a permanent government, and strengthening their freedom, and should exert themselves to become accustomed to republican habits. Cuba, will perhaps, stand in greater need of the patriotism of her children to overcome these critical circumstances than to acquire her independence. I believe, however, the opinions of my friends to the contrary notwithstanding, that if the selections are properly made by the people, a sufficient number of learned and disinterested persons will be found to guide the country safely in the best course. These men will meet, indeed, with a great number of obstacles in their way; they will need to be endowed with great and eminent virtues, and it is to be feared that they will die from grief and disgust, even if they escape poison and the dagger.

After being undeceived by a painful and sad experience, Cubans may resort to the remedy of annexation. This will be, in all probability, the only recourse of Mexico, and all other American countries of Spanish descent. My friend does not overlook the faults of the generality of Cubans. He acknowledges that they are almost wholly unconcerned for the evils of their country; that they have inherited from the Spaniards the passion of envy, as they refuse to own the virtues of many of their countrymen, and enjoy themselves in underrating their merits; that they do not read, or endeavor to enlighten themselves and improve their character. He believes, however, that the exceptions to these rules, though not numerous, are sufficient to form and organize a good legislative and administrative body, and that the vices of the great majority would be corrected with the aid of the free press.

Cubans have heretofore held two prejudicial and mischievous errors. They thought that the Americans might accept the annexation of Cuba, before she became an independent state; and also that we might wrest the Island from the possession of the Spaniards by conquest. It is singular that the members of the Junta, who have been for years living in the United States, should have also participated of these popular errors.

The Cubans will argue that we also are ignorant of the affairs of their country, and I am anxious that my letters should in some measure contribute to make this charge groundless. I am also desirous that more experienced pens should give us some other valuable data about an Island, the study of which is so interesting to our Republic.

In regard to the execution of the plans of Don Plácido, I may say that if the energetic and warm patriots of the Island wait for the expeditions from America, formed with the money of wealthy Cubans, they will wait in vain. These latter believe that their money has been wholly wasted by those who heretofore received it in charge, and though I have no reliable information, whether this charge is well founded or not, the fact is that no person with whom I have spoken on these matters differs from that opinion, and they positively assert that no one will succeed again in enjoying other people's money by such means. Don Plácido therefore can entertain no other hope than that of a general insurrection throughout the country, and I venture to say that he himself is well aware of this truth.

THE END.

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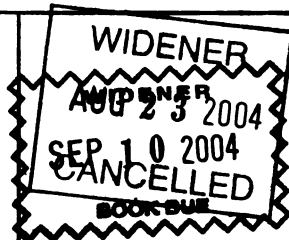




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